Social networks. families and neighbourhoods: brancepeth parish in the seventeenth century

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Social Networks, Families and Neighbourhoods: Brancepeth Parish in the Seventeenth Century

by

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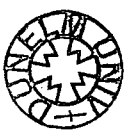

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D. E. Hamilton, 'Social Networks, Families and Neighbourhoods: Brancepeth Parish in the Seventeenth Century'

Abstract

Brancepeth parish is situated in County Durham in the north of England. In the seventeenth century the parish contained seven townships. This study questions the idea of the parish as a single social community by examining social networks between families living within the different townships of the parish.

The study is based on a Family Reconstitution which was undertaken in order to reconstruct the life-cycles of family groups who lived in the farms and villages of Brancepeth parish in the seventeenth century. Wills, inventories, land records, the Hearth Tax and a church seating plan have been used to assess the kinds of families represented by the Family Reconstitution in Brancepeth.

The scale and structure of social interactions between families have been investigated using Ucinet social network analysis software. The networks analysed were based on witnessing wills, appraising inventories, loans of money made on trust, kinship and surnames. The results clearly point to the existence of a number of social communities within the parish population, the importance of neighbours, and the presence of kin within the neighbourhood.

The findings of this study are discussed in the context of the economic structure of the parish, the influence of recusancy, and the history and culture of the population. The study concludes that Brancepeth parish in the seventeenth century had many of the features of a traditional medieval society, in an early modern world.

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Declaration and Copyright

The text of this thesis (including footnotes but excluding tables, figures, the appendix, sources list and bibliography) does not exceed 85,000 words, as permitted by the University of Durham Graduate School. Chapter one section 1.2 (pages 17-24), Figure 1.3 and Figure 4.1 includes work which was submitted towards the degree of M. A. in Local History (C. N. A. A.), University of Teesside, 1992.

The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth was undertaken with the assistance of Ros Davies at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge, and with the assistance of Joyce Carse and her team of data prep staff at the University of Durham computer centre. It is necessary to identify which parts of this process were undertaken by myself, and which parts of the process were undertaken by others.

Ros Davies guided me though the process of Family Reconstitution. She undertook the processing and amendment of the computer records at Cambridge, and produced the output files. Joyce Carse and her data input team at the University of Durham Computer Centre entered all baptism, marriage and burial data on disk. I transcribed all the information from the original parish registers on to forms ready for data input and checked the data input work done by the computer centre. I was responsible for coding the name sets. After the first and second run of the Family Reconstitution programs I checked the results and picked out queries. Together, Ros and I discussed the queries and Ros made amendments to the Family Reconstitution files.

Abbreviations used

BC	Brancepeth Church
CBP	Calendar of Border Papers
CLRO	City of London Record Office
CPR	Calendar of Patent Rolls
CSP(D)	Calendar of State Papers (Domestic)
DCA	Duchy of Cornwall Archives
DDCL	Durham Cathedral Dean and Chapter Library
DCRO	Durham County Record Office
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
DULASC	Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections
FRF	Family Reconstitution form
MDS	Multi-dimensional scaling
PRO	Public Record Office
QAP	Quadratic Assignment Procedure
TWAS	Tyne and Wear Archive Service

Chapter 1 Introducing the Study

1.1 Introduction

Brancepeth is in County Durham, in the north of England. Like many other northern parishes, the parish of Brancepeth was made up of a number of townships. In the seventeenth century, it contained seven villages and a large number of scattered farms. The eastern boundaries of this agricultural parish came within two miles of Durham City. Brancepeth was large enough, at 31 square miles, with a population of over 1,000 people, to encompass different neighbourhoods within its boundaries.

The parish of Brancepeth was part of the Lordship of Brancepeth, one of the two lordships belonging to the Earl of Westmorland, the most powerful lay landholder in the County Palatine of Durham until the latter part of the sixteenth century. After the Earl of Westmorland's attainder in 1570, Brancepeth became a Crown lordship, and it was not until the 1630s that a new lord of the manor took up long-term residence in the castle which stood near the centre of the parish. The Cole family, who had made their money from trading in coal on Tyneside, held the majority of the lordship until the end of the century.[1]

This research will focus on the social networks which help to define 'community' within the seventeenth century parish of Brancepeth. The methodologies employed include Family Reconstitution, record linkage and social network analysis. The main sources are parish registers, wills and inventories, land records and the Hearth Tax assessments. English local communities have often been portrayed as places full of conflict,

[1] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue.

Figure 1.1 The location of Brancepeth parish

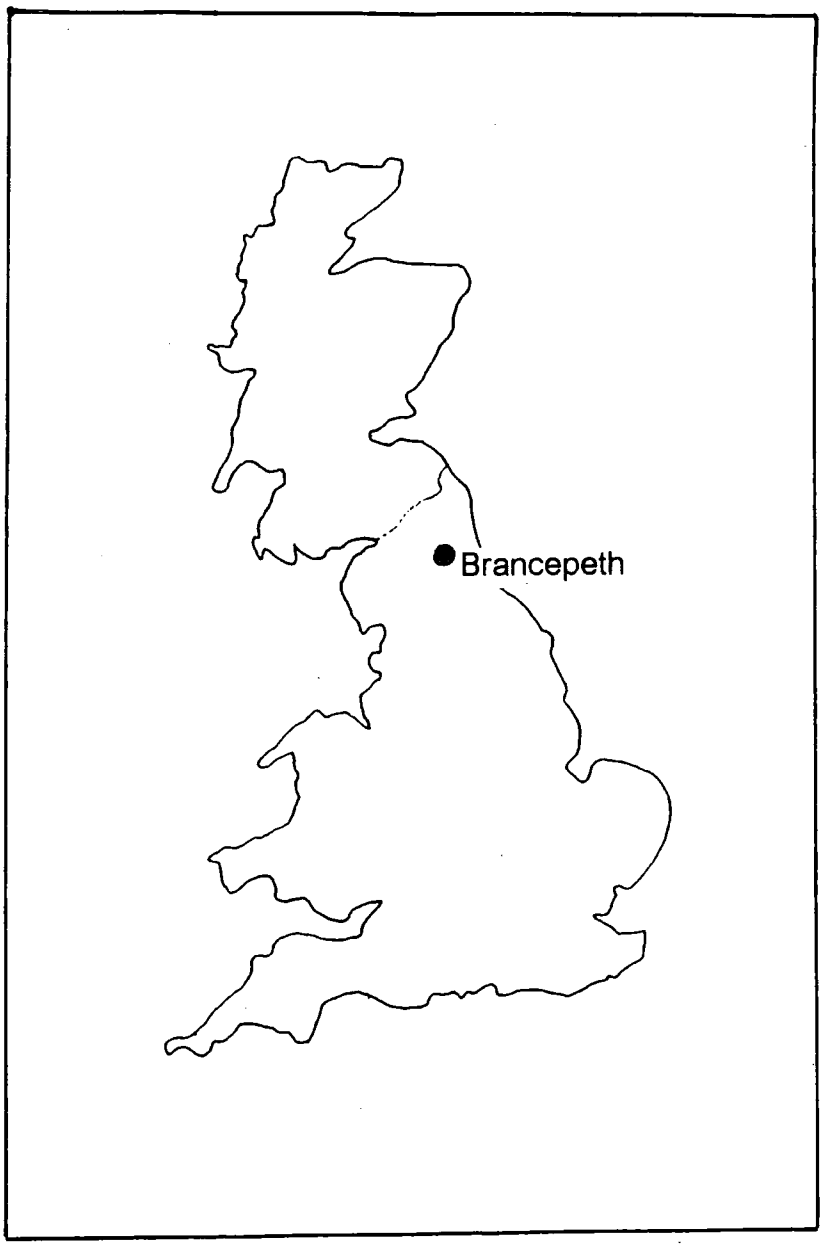
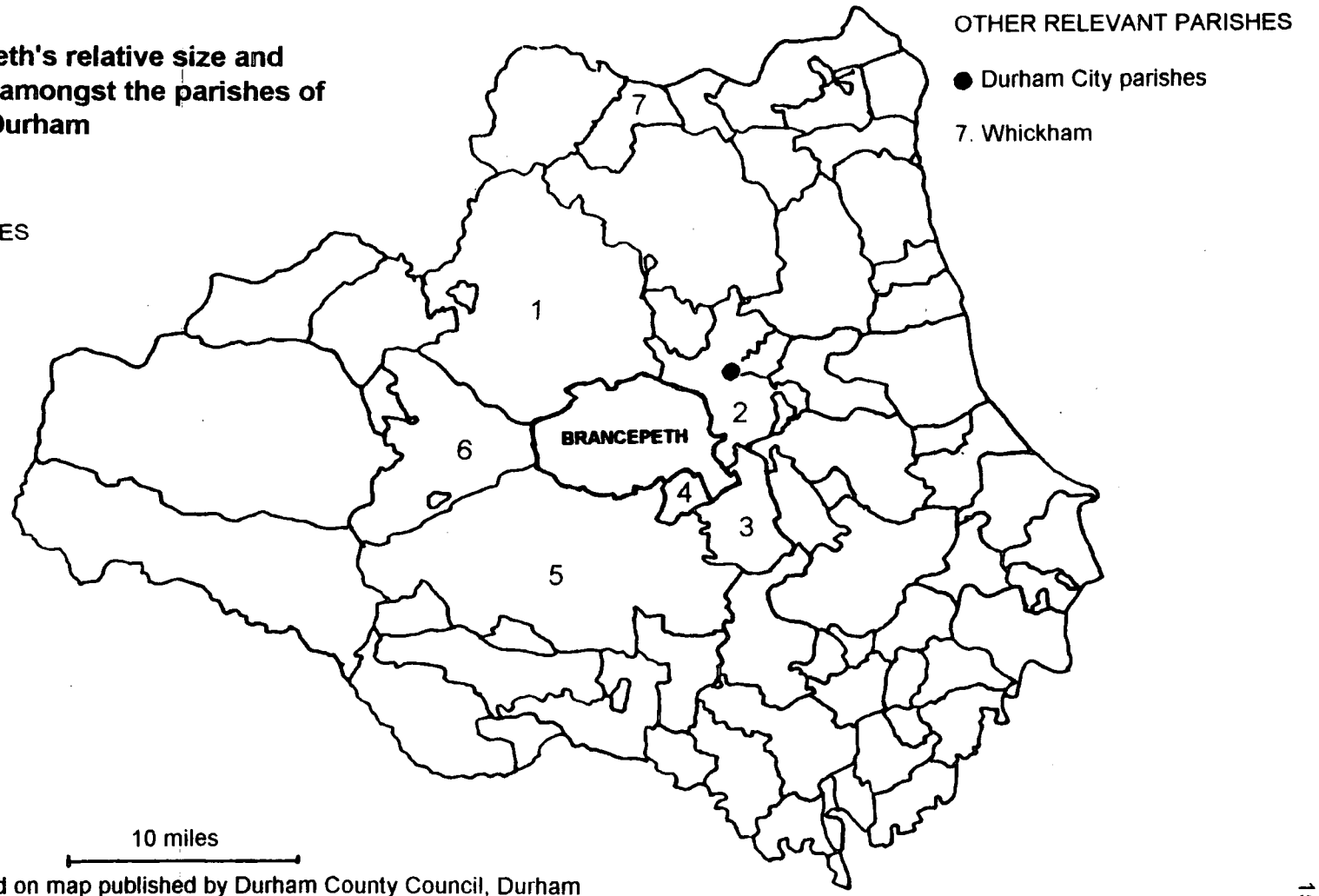


Figure 1.2 Brancepeth's relative size and position amongst the parishes of County Durham



Parish boundaries based on map published by Durham County Council, Durham Parish and Chapelry Boundaries, circa 1800, 1983.

meanness and disharmony.[2] This study aims to counterbalance this image by investigating the more harmonious aspects of social relationships which existed in the local community.

My special interest in Brancepeth began when I discovered some very unusual parish register entries, while looking for parishes to study as part of the course work for an M. A. in Local History. For a ten year period, between 1629 and 1638, the Brancepeth parish register entries contained a great deal of additional information, including the names, addresses and sometimes the marital status of the godparents at baptisms. Because there was a good collection of other records from Brancepeth for a similar period,[3] it was possible to use the godparent records to discuss the importance of kin and neighbours in Brancepeth in my M. A. course dissertation.[4] This initial study convinced me that a much more extensive record linkage project would be possible, and that a study of social networks within the parish could add some valuable evidence to a number of areas of historical interest: kinship, neighbourhood, and the definition of local communities using networks of social ties.

In this chapter I will outline of the main findings from my M. A. study. Godparenthood raises important issues about kin and neighbours which have been further investigated in this thesis. The remaining sections of this chapter outline the historical debates which are relevant to

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[2] E.g. L. Stone, ' Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1800', Past and Present, No. 101, (1983).

[3] Some of these sources are mentioned in J. Hoffman, 'John Cosin's Cure of Souls: Parish Priest at Brancepeth and Elwick, County Durham', Durham University Journal, New Series, Vol. 30, (1978).

[4] D. Hamilton, 'Families, Friends and Neighbours: Godparents in the parish of Brancepeth, 1629-1638', M. A. Local History course dissertation, Teesside Polytechnic, (1992).

this thesis, and describe the sources and methods used in this research. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the questions to be answered and the contribution this study of Brancepeth can make to wider historical debate.

The parish of Brancepeth will be introduced in chapter two, using a mixture of descriptive sources and methods. Chapter three will include a detailed discussion of the Family Reconstitution and record linkage process used. It will also assess the representativeness of the reconstituted population, in relation to landholding, wealth and poverty. Chapter four will use the Family Reconstitution families to investigate social networks within the parish using Ucinet (social network analysis software). The thesis will conclude with a discussion of the significance of the results of the study (chapter five).

1.2 Godparents in the parish of Brancepeth, 1629-1638

The study which I undertook for the degree of M. A. in Local History set out to assess the significance of kin and neighbours in the choice of godparents made by Brancepeth parents in the early seventeenth century. Between 1629 and 1638, there were 446 baptisms recorded in the Brancepeth parish register. Almost all of the baptism records showed three godparents, producing over 1300 godparents for analysis. Although there has been some discussion of godparents in medieval England using sources such as 'proofs of age' in inquisitions post mortem, there are few studies based on parish registers covering all sections of the parish population.[5]

[5] See M. Bennett, 'Spiritual Kinship and the Baptismal Name in Traditional European Society', in L. A. Frappell, (ed.), Principalities, Powers and Estates: Essays in Medieval and Early Modern Government and Society, (Adelaide, 1979); P. Niles, 'Baptism and the Naming of Children in Late Medieval England', Medieval Prosopography, No. 3, Part 1, (1982); L. Haas, 'Social Connections between Parents and Godparents in Late Medieval

In some societies, godparents were normally chosen from the kin group. In a twentieth-century village in Burgundy, France, godparents were chosen in a recognisable pattern, starting with grandparents then aunts and uncles, balancing choices from the maternal and paternal line.[6] However, Dupaquier's study of a village in the Vexin, France, showed that only some seventeenth-century families chose godparents according to these kinds of rules.[7]

The possibility that many godparents in Brancepeth were kin, was tested by calculating the percentage of godparents who shared the same surname as their godchildren. Only nine per cent of godparents matched this criterion. Further evidence on the surname distribution in the parish would be needed to assess what proportion of these surname matches were kinship matches. Without reconstructing the family trees of each family baptising children, it was impossible to recognise godparents who were kin, but who had different surnames. The interpretation of the percentage of matching surnames was consequently limited. However, the low percentage of matching surnames suggested that only modest numbers of godparents were probably kin. According to the evidence of medieval 'proofs of age', English godparents and godchildren had

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Yorkshire', Medieval Prosopography, Vol. 10, No. 1, (1989); Jeremy Boulton has analysed naming patterns in the London parish of St. Pancras, Soper Lane, J. Boulton, 'The naming of children in seventeenth-century London'. I am grateful to J. Boulton for providing me with a copy of this unpublished paper in 1991. See also S. Smith-Bannister, Names and Naming Patterns in England, 1538-1700, (Oxford, 1997), chapter 2.

[6] F. Zonabend, 'Baptismal Kinship at Minot (Cote d'Or)', in E. Forster and P. M. Ranum, (eds.), Ritual, Religion and the Sacred, (Baltimore, 1982), p. 68.

[7] J. Dupaquier, 'Naming-practices, Godparenthood, and Kinship in the Vexin, 1540-1900', Journal of Family History, Vol. 6, (1981), p. 150-1.

similarly low percentages of shared surnames, suggesting that most were probably not kin in the middle ages.[8]

A further assessment of the significance of kinship ties in the godparent relationship was made, by looking at the naming patterns between godparents and godchildren, and between parents and their children. The traditional custom of the godparent naming the child with his or her own name was still the normal pattern in seventeenth-century Brancepeth.[9] Table 1.1 shows the proportion of female godchildren who shared the same first name with their godparents or their mother. Table 1.2 shows the proportion of boys who shared the name of their godfather or father. Approximately eighty per cent of children could have been named after their godparent rather than their natural parent. The spiritual relationship paralleled the lineage of biological kinship; the godparent usually provided the christian name, and the parents provided the surname. These figures are similar to the patterns of name sharing observed in medieval England. Niles noted eighty-six per cent of godchildren who shared the name of at least one of their godparents; Haas found that thirty-three out of thirty-eight godchildren shared the same first name as at least one of their godparents.[10] Boulton's study of naming patterns in seventeenth-century London suggested that this custom was declining, in favour of naming sons with the names of their fathers.[11] Smith-Bannister's work, based on a number of parish registers, has shown that name sharing with godparents clearly declined from over eighty per cent between the mid sixteenth century to under fifty per cent

[8] Niles, 'Baptism', p. 101; Haas, 'Social Connections' p. 9.

[9] See Niles, 'Baptism', pp. 99, 103; D. Cressy, Birth, Marriage and Death, (Oxford, 1997), p. 161.

[10] Niles, 'Baptism' p. 98; Haas, 'Social Connections', p. 18.

[11] Boulton, 'Naming of Children'.

Table 1.1 Female godchildren who shared the same first name as their godmothers and/or mothers

Shared name with:	Number of cases	Percentage
Mother only	14	7%
Mother and godmother(s)	25	12%
Godmother(s) only	151	71%
Neither mother nor godmother	21	10%
TOTAL	211	100%

Table 1.2 Male godchildren who shared the same first name as their godfathers and/or fathers

Shared name with:	Number of cases	Percentage
Father only	18	8%
Father and godfather(s)	31	14%
Godfather(s) only	139	61%
Neither father nor godfather	38	17%
TOTAL	226	100%

by the end of the seventeenth century, and that name sharing between parents and children rose in the same period.[12] In Brancepeth, perpetuating the first names of both parents was not the highest priority when selecting a godparent. If it had been, parents would have needed to have a higher proportion of children named with their own name, particularly if the first child named for the parent died in childhood.

It is very unusual to find the addresses of godparents given in a parish register. Because these addresses were recorded in the Brancepeth records, it was possible, in 850 cases, to identify both the parents' and the godparents' home by village or farm, and therefore to accurately measure the distance between them. The results showed that sixty-eight per cent of godparents lived within a mile of their godchildren, and eighty-one per cent lived within two miles. Taking into account the rather scattered nature of some of the settlements in the parish, most godparents were apparently chosen from amongst the neighbours, often from the same village or hamlet.

The parents of young children in Brancepeth appeared to be investing in social relationships within their own immediate neighbourhood at this important stage in the family life-cycle. Anthropological research has suggested that in some peasant societies, godparenthood, and other forms of ritual co-parenthood, was used to form permanently loyal social bonds between, primarily, parents and godparents.[13] Brancepeth parents

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[12] Smith-Bannister, Names, pp. 37-40.

[13] S. W. Minz and E. R. Wolf, 'Ritual Co-parenthood (Compadrazgo)', in J. Goody, (ed.), Kinship: Selected Readings, (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 346; M. Bloch and S. Guggenheim, 'Compadrazgo, Baptism and the Symbolism of a Second Birth', Man, New Series, Vol. 16, (1981), p. 376; S. Gudeman, 'The Compadrazgo as a Reflection of the Natural and Spiritual Person', Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, (1971); R. L. Stirrat, 'Compadrazgo in Catholic Sri Lanka', Man, New Series, Vol. 10, (1975).

may have been using the opportunities of godparenthood to form strong supportive alliances with other households in their local community.

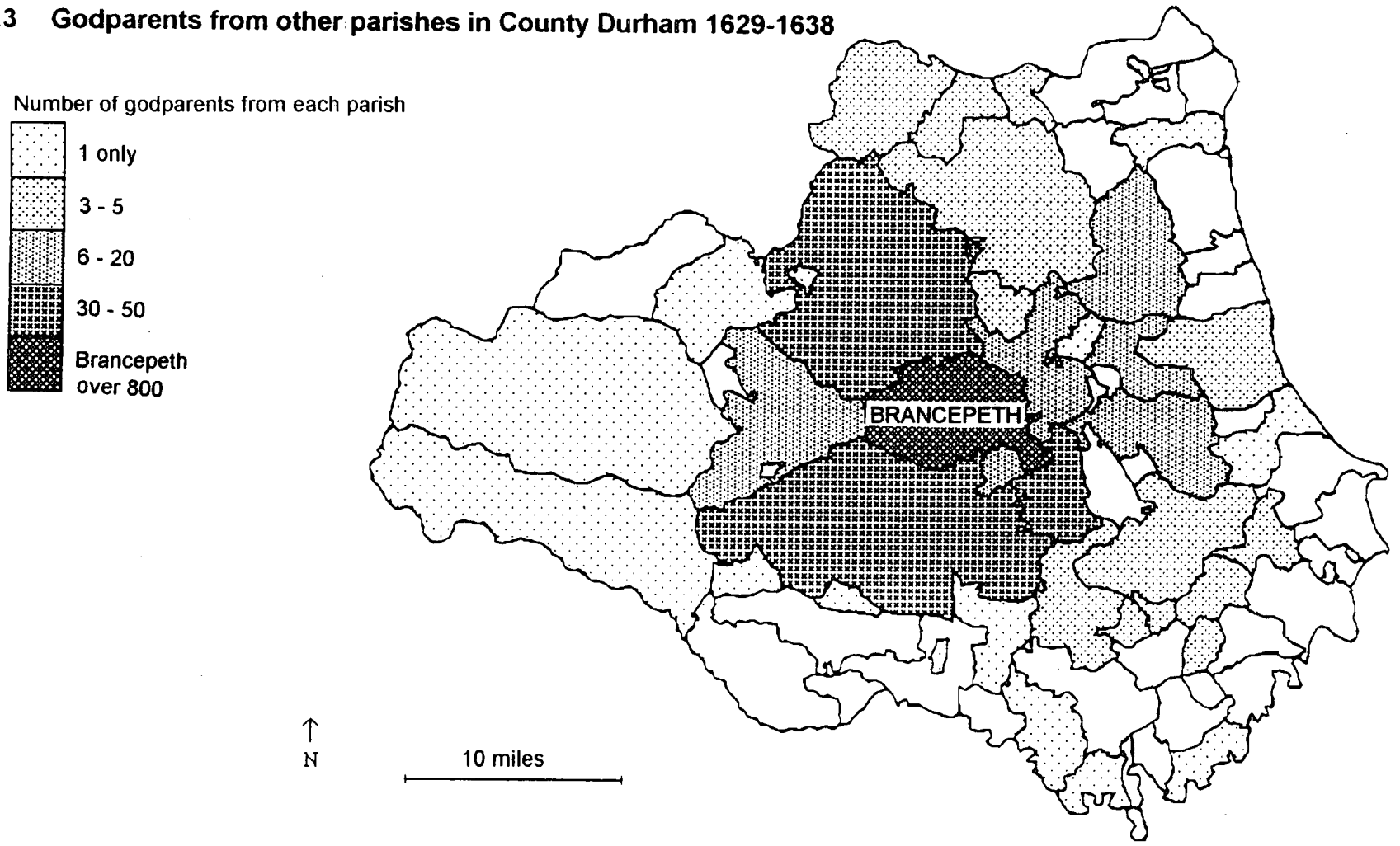
If the main purpose of choosing a godparent was to gain financial assistance for the family, it could be expected that the small number of gentry resident in the parish might have been regularly sought as godparents, or perhaps the bailiff of the lordship. However, this did not happen in Brancepeth on a regular basis. Over the ten year period, the most any one name appeared within the godparents list was thirteen times. Godparenthood appeared to be something which was widely spread among the households of Brancepeth parish, not concentrated amongst a few influential individuals.

Although seventy-five per cent of traceable godparents came from within Brancepeth parish, over fifty godparents came from Durham City, and a significant number came from parishes from all over County Durham, as shown in Figure 1.3. Seven godparents came from Newcastle, three from Northumberland parishes, and two were traced to Yorkshire parishes. These records illustrated some of the social ties which Brancepeth people maintained with kin and friends who lived outside the parish.

The M. A. study of godparents raised some interesting questions about the importance of kin and neighbours. The choice of godparents appears to have been strongly influenced by customs which, in England, may have changed according to a changing view of the importance of the family compared to the wider community.[14] In Brancepeth, the 'community' pattern of godparent choice clearly prevailed in the early seventeenth

[14] Boulton, 'The naming of children'.

Figure 1.3 Godparents from other parishes in County Durham 1629-1638



century. Could this be an indicator of the weakness of kinship ties in Brancepeth, or the strength of neighbourly relationships?

Perhaps godparenthood could be particularly useful to a new family unit who wished to integrate itself into the local community, the 'collectivity' as Laslett has called it.[15] Brancepeth people may have preferred to use the social opportunity of godparenthood to strengthen their ties with neighbours, rather than intensify relationships with some members of their kin group, by adding a spiritual tie. Networks of supportive neighbours could potentially be very valuable to a family undergoing all the pressures of raising children, and in practice as important, or more important than kin who lived further away.

Although the godparent records provided strong evidence for the importance of neighbours in seventeenth-century Brancepeth, this may have been a particular feature of the godparent-parent relationship. Other kinds of relationships within the parish may not have been so clearly based upon the neighbourhood. This study will analyse other social networks within the parish of Brancepeth in order to discover whether the neighbourhood pattern of social relationships produced by the godparent records was repeated in social networks based on other types of relationships. If good neighbourliness was an important social value in Brancepeth, relationships with neighbours could be expected to feature strongly in other networks of support.

[15] P. Laslett, 'Family, Kinship and Collectivity as Systems of Support in Pre-industrial Europe', Continuity and Change, Vol. 3, (1988).

1.3 The community study and its contribution to historical debate

Local history has, until fairly recently, suffered from the stigma of being considered an antiquarian pursuit, the territory of the amateur, a 'poor relation' to 'history proper'.[16] However, because of increasing academic interest in social history, which often turns the attention of historians to local, rather than government sources, local studies have now become more academically respectable, mainly as an opportunity to test general theories. There has also been a sustained effort to argue that the study of local history is a valid exercise in itself, not just a way of illustrating or testing national themes in social history.[17] This study of Brancepeth is a contribution to the local history of northern England, within a limited framework of time, but it can also be seen as following in a line of other studies of different kinds of historical communities. Collectively, these studies have begun to show the similarities and differences in small-scale English communities in the early modern period.

Sociologists and social anthropologists have put considerable energy into defining the meaning of the word 'community'.[18] It seems to be impossible to agree a universally useful definition, although central to the concept seems to be people who have something in common.[19]

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[16] K. Schurer, 'The Future for Local History: Boom or Recession? ', Local Historian, Vol. 21, No. 3, (1991), p. 99; See also, J. D. Marshall, The Tyranny of the Discrete, (Aldershot, 1997).

[17] The concern for the study of the 'Origins, Growth, Decline and Fall' of a local community was argued by Finberg in 1952. This theme has been developed by subsequent staff from the Leicester University Department of English Local History, see C. Phythian-Adams, 'Introduction', in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850, (Leicester, 1993), p. 3.

[18] See T. Bender, Community and Social Change in America, (New Jersey, 1978), p. 5.

[19] E.g. C. Bell and H. Newby, Community Studies, (London, 1971); A. Macfarlane, 'History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities', Social History, Vol. 5, (1977).

Descriptions such as 'a territorial group of people with a common mode of living striving for common objectives'[20] could be appropriated for some kinds of historical studies. However, the word has been used in different ways by different researchers in history and the social sciences.[21] Dennis and Daniels argue that 'the concept of community has evolved with both a descriptive meaning, indicating a particular social group living in a certain area, and an evaluative meaning, indicating a positive neighbourly quality of social relationships'.[22] Both the descriptive and the evaluative meaning can be applied to this study of Brancepeth.

Although the idea of studying local communities is far from new,[23] there is still a need for further studies. Since the work of Margaret Spufford, David Hey, Alan Macfarlane, Keith Wrightson and David Levine in the 1970s, there has been a trickle of early modern community studies, including theses, some of which have been published.[24] Each study tends

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[20] R. Frankenberg, Communities in Britain, (1966) quoted by Macfarlane in 'History, anthropology', p. 632.

[21] R. Dennis and S. Daniels, ' 'Community' and the Social Geography of Victorian Cities', in M. Drake, (ed.) Time, Family and Community, (Oxford, 1994), p. 202. See J. Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society, (Cambridge, 1987), p. 230; M. Spufford, Contrasting Communities, (Cambridge, 1974).

[22] Dennis and Daniels, 'Community', p. 202.

[23] See W. G. Hoskins, The Midland Peasant, (London, 1957).

[24] D. Hey, An English Rural Community. Myddle Under the Tudors and Stuarts, (Leicester, 1974); Spufford, Contrasting Communities; A. Macfarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities, (Cambridge, 1977); K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village, (London, 1979). More recent studies include M. Prior, Fisher Row, (Oxford, 1982), C. Howell, Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition: Kibworth Harcourt 1280-1700, (Cambridge, 1983), Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society, G. Nair, Highley. The Development of a Community 1550-1880, (Oxford, 1988), B. Reay, Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930, (Cambridge, 1996), and theses such as R. A. Davies, 'Community, Parish and Poverty: Old Swinford, 1660-1730', Ph. D. thesis, University of Leicester, (1987).

to focus on a different aspect of the local community, depending on the sources available and the particular interests of the historians involved.[25]

Margaret Spufford's study of three parishes in Cambridgeshire used a wide variety of local sources to compare the economic fortunes of the farming community in the three parishes studied, over the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Each parish had a different pattern of farming, based on the soil type, and the local tenure arrangements. Spufford, as part of the aims of her study, was investigating the reduction of the numbers of small landholdings in this period, looking in detail at three different kinds of farming areas. By doing this, she was investigating one of the influential theories of economic history, using case studies of three parishes. However, she also investigated other aspects of the social worlds of the parishes. Because of the extent of her research with local records, she was also able to link the economic analysis with other aspects of the parishes she studied, in particular religious nonconformity, and educational opportunity.[26]

David Hey's study of Myddle in Shropshire, published in 1974, was based around the extraordinary History of Myddle, written in 1701 by Richard Gough, one of the yeomen residents of the parish.[27] Gough's book provided Hey with the basis of a community study of a different kind, because Gough recounted the history of each family who occupied a pew in Myddle church. In his study, An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts, Hey was able to analyse a wide range of

[25] E.g. D. Underdown, Fire From Heaven, (London, 1992); D. Hey, The Fiery Blades of Hallamshire, (Leicester, 1991); D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The Making of an Industrial Society, (Oxford, 1991).

[26] Spufford, Contrasting Communities.

[27] R. Gough, The History of Myddle, edited by D. Hey, (London, 1981); Hey, English Rural Community.

additional parish records to piece together other aspects of Myddle's history. Gough's History, in the 'gossip' shared about fellow parishioners and their ancestors, provides an important interpretative framework which opens up the realities of social relationships at parish level. Unfortunately, so far, no other source which is as illuminating as Gough's History has been discovered for other parishes.

The 1970s was a very productive time for community studies. In 1970 Alan Macfarlane published an analysis of another exceptional source, the very detailed diary of an Essex clergyman, Ralph Josselin.[28] By 1977 he was able to publish a book about Earls Colne, Ralph Josselin's parish. Macfarlane's book, Reconstructing Historical Communities, concentrated on the methodology which was used to collate information about the lives of particular villagers, other than the vicar. With the assistance of a team of researchers, over a number of years, Macfarlane set about the process of linking information from the whole range of historical documents which included information about the residents of Earls Colne. As an anthropologist, Macfarlane was investigating the possibility of reconstructing a community which could be studied from historical records, to help to determine the extent to which pre-industrial England had similarities with other peasant societies. Although Macfarlane was aware of the powerful potentials of social network analysis, at the time the book was published, it was not possible to analyse large community networks by microcomputer. The main achievement of the book was to illustrate his record linkage methodology, and to show how it was possible to piece together aspects of the lives of individual residents, using a variety of historical sources.[29]

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[28] A. Macfarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, (Cambridge, 1970); A. Macfarlane, (ed.), The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683, (Oxford, 1976).

[29] Macfarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities, pp. 19-21, 140-150.

Keith Wrightson and David Levine's study of Terling in Essex was published in 1979.[30] This study went beyond Macfarlane's methodology of record linkage, to include the use of Family Reconstitution as a basis for the record linkage process. Family Reconstitution, pioneered in France by Louis Henry, and developed in England by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, utilised only parish registers to calculate demographic statistics about the parishes studied.[31] Wrightson and Levine's study of Terling used Family Reconstitution to calculate the demographic history of the small population of Terling; however the greatest achievement of the study was to link information from a wide range of other parish sources, to produce a coherent argument about the influence of puritan religious beliefs amongst the yeomen farmers of the village, and the social divides between them and the 'ungodly', who also often happened to be less prosperous. This argument is of great significance to our understanding of early modern society. The 'community study' of Terling tackled the larger question of socio-economic polarisation in local communities, and the social effects of the Reformation; two key elements which have been blamed for damaging the community life of villages.[32]

One of the big questions resulting from the Terling study is the extent to which the Terling experience was replicated elsewhere. As to causes, Spufford has argued that Puritanism may not have been the

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[30] Wrightson and Levine, Terling.

[31] E. A. Wrigley, 'Family Reconstitution', in E. A. Wrigley (ed.), An Introduction to Historical Demography, (London, 1966).

[32] A survey of these arguments can be found in R. M. Smith, ' 'Modernisation' and the Corporate Medieval Village Community in England: some sceptical reflections', in A. R. Baker and D. Gregory, (eds.), Explorations in Historical Geography, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 142-144.

crucial factor in social divides which could be held responsible for the disintegration of the traditional village community.[33] Studies of communities where Puritan influences were minimal would make it possible to question this explanation. Communities which were not so clearly differentiated by wealth could also provide evidence to help to assess the regional and local chronology of the process of change from traditions of self-sufficiency to the commercial exploitation of land for the sale of produce, from communities of small-holding neighbours in similar circumstances, to local societies of winners and losers, of prospering yeomen and impoverished labourers.[34]

Even though Wrightson and Levine's pioneering study of Terling has clearly inspired a number of other studies, there are still not enough community studies to draw many useful comparisons between them, in terms of the type of community, the location, and the questions investigated. Because of the problem of different sets of records being available in each community studied, differences in the kinds of places studied, and the difficulties of handling very large quantities of data, historians have tended to concentrate their efforts to answer specific questions, often ones which are of particular significance to the 'community' they have chosen to study.

There is a particular dearth of studies of localities in northern England. There are studies of very different kinds of places, such as the cutlery-producing community of 'Hallamshire', Sheffield;[35] and

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[33] M. Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control?', in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), Order and Disorder in Early Modern England, (Cambridge, 1985).

[34] See Spufford's review of arguments in Contrasting Communities, p. 47-56, and also K. Wrightson, English Society 1580-1680, (London, 1982), p. 140.

[35] Hey, Hallamshire.

Whitehaven, the new town created by the Lowthers to develop the coal and tobacco trade in the north west.[36] Levine and Wrightson's own study of Whickham in the north of County Durham uses comparable methods to those used for Terling, but the study makes a dramatic contrast to Terling, because, as Levine and Wrightson appositely describe it, Whickham was an 'industrial society'. [37] In different ways, both Terling and Whickham were very well-advanced in the process of modernisation.

A lot of community studies are still needed, because it is impossible for such a small number of studies to be able to speak for the whole range of different kinds of community in early modern England. Comparing the farming parishes so far studied in the seventeenth century, such as Terling, Myddle and the Cambridgeshire parishes, there are as many differences as similarities, other than that they are situated in the south of England.[38] In the north, historians appear to have been fascinated primarily with early industrialisation, rather than farming parishes. The only parish to have been studied which is anywhere near Brancepeth is Whickham. Whickham was certainly a very unusual parish, and in no way typical of the north in general.

1.4 Kinship in local communities

Many pages have been published on the subject of family life in the early modern period. Much of this literature concentrates on the family life cycle, and uses examples from diaries and autobiographies as a main

[36] J. Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, (Cambridge, 1981).

[37] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham.

[38] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p.19; Hey, English Rural Community, p. 7-8; Spufford, Contrasting Communities.

source of evidence.[39] The remaining literature mostly comes from the results of demographic study, including Family Reconstitution. As a result of this recent research it is now possible to have a much better understanding of family life in the seventeenth century, for all sections of society. However, one aspect of family life, the practical role of kinship, still remains fairly obscure. Keith Wrightson observed in 1981, that in this area 'we have scarcely begun to scratch the surface'.[40]

Since 1981 there has been some progress made. Richard Vann compared the variety of kin mentioned in the Banbury wills he studied, in comparison with Wrightson and Levine's findings from Terling. Vann's research suggested that in the urban society of Banbury, kinship recognition was not so shallow and narrow as in Terling.[41] David Cressy published an article using evidence from letters and wills, arguing that complex kinship connections could be traced and used when necessary. Kinship, he suggested, opened up a 'range of possibilities', rather than providing clearly-defined obligations in early modern society.[42] Christine Issa took a different view; she argued that some aspects of kinship behaviour were determined by obligations rather than choice, although she found that bequests to wider kinsfolk were mainly influenced by the age and family circumstances of the testator.[43] Will Coster's study of

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[39] An example of this type of approach is M. Abbott, Life Cycles in England 1560-1720, (London, 1996). See also Cressy, Birth, Marriage and Death.

[40] K. Wrightson, 'Household and Kinship in Sixteenth Century England', History Workshop No. 12, (1981).

[41] R. Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town', Journal of Family History, Vol. 4, (1979).

[42] D. Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', Past and Present, No. 113, (1986), p. 49.

[43] C. Issa, 'Obligation and Choice: Aspects of Family and Kinship in Seventeenth-Century County Durham', Ph.D. thesis, University of St Andrews, (1986), p. 168.

kinship recognition, based on a survey of wills from three Yorkshire parishes, quantified the categories of kin mentioned in a large number of wills. He also found that the range of kin recognised was related to the family circumstances of the testators at different stages of the life-cycle, and that the sex and status of the testator, and the demographic background all affected the range of kin recognised in wills.[44] J. A. Johnston has shown a decline in bequests to non-kin in the local community and a rise in bequests to the direct descendants, over the period 1567-1800 in a series of Lincolnshire parishes. He suggests this may be connected to population growth, and therefore harder times for the small farmers who made up the greatest proportion of the will-makers he studied.[45] Wills have so far been used as the main source for determining kinship recognition. However, these studies have shown that there are many other factors which affect kinship recognition in wills, other than the testator's concern and connections with his or her kin group. What are needed, are alternative sources and methodologies to test the significance of kinship at different stages of the life-cycle, when passing on family property was not the first priority. Although Cressy has argued that letters show that even distant kin links could be a potential source of help,[46] at the level of the illiterate yeoman, husbandman and cottager, other kinds of sources are needed.

Peter Laslett's work in the 1970s on the size and composition of English households revealed that many people lived in households with only a small number of other people. Using a whole range of household

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[44] W. Coster, Kinship and Inheritance in Early Modern England: Three Yorkshire Parishes, (York, 1993), p. 24.

[45] J. A. Johnston, 'Family, Kin and Community in Eight Lincolnshire Parishes, 1567-1800', Rural History, Vol. 6 No. 2, (1995).

[46] Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction'.

listings from different parts of the country, Laslett found that the average number of people per household was 4.75, including servants, although this varied from community to community, and over time.[47] Obviously, the average is affected by some rich households, which tended to include higher numbers of servants and other relatives who could be accommodated in these larger homes, and also larger households with lodgers in towns and cities. In contrast, many households had fewer than four persons living there. Laslett's work on household structure dismissed the idea that it was normal for people in pre-industrial England to live in large peasant households containing members of the wider kin group. However, having separate residential arrangements does not necessarily mean that the English were less concerned about other members of their kinsfolk than were people living in areas of Europe where the extended peasant family household was more common.[48] In England, kin living in separate households may have been just as supportive, particularly if they lived close by.

Many of the single-person households which Laslett found were headed by widows. For these widows, the presence or absence of kin living locally could be crucial in times of crisis, unless, of course, neighbours offered more practical support than kin. The social networks of the elderly are therefore potentially quite significant for the provision of care in old age. In our own society, community care for the elderly is most effective if the elderly person living alone has a network of family or friends living locally who are willing and able to help out when necessary. Unfortunately for many, the period of old age coincides with a reduction in

[47] P. Laslett, 'Mean Household Size in England since the Sixteenth Century', in P. Laslett and R. Wall, (eds.), Household and Family in Past Time, (Cambridge, 1972).

[48] See for example the households described in A. Plakans and C. Wetherell, 'The Kinship Domain in an East European Peasant Community: Pinkenhof, 1833-1850', American Historical Review, (1988), p. 371.

day-to-day contacts, as a result of the death of friends, children who move away, and reduced mobility, making it more difficult for the elderly person to establish new friends outside the neighbourhood. For these reasons, many elderly people may become dependent on the help of neighbours.[49] In early modern society, the number of single-person households suggests that it was possible for some elderly people, particularly women, to survive living on their own, possibly because of effective locally-based social networks.

If elderly people had well-developed kinship networks, this could be an indication that, throughout life, kinship connections were actively fostered with at least some of the kin group. Laslett's findings show that children were normally brought up in households with just parents, siblings, and possibly a servant or two. The main complication would have been, for some, having to live with step-parents and step-brothers and sisters, or living in a single parent family because of the death of a parent. Children would also have experienced the death of siblings. Although infant mortality rates are known to be only about 140 per 1,000 in the seventeenth century, most families would experience the death of at least one child, as approximately twenty-five per cent of children died before reaching the age of ten years.[50] When completed family sizes were only six to seven children, and twenty-five per cent of children died before the age of ten, young people could find that by the time they left home, they had on average no more than four siblings, some of whom may have already left home.[51] If the family group was broken by the early death of

[49] M. I. Broese van Groenou, 'The Proximate Network' in M. G. Everett and K. Rennolls, (eds.), International Conference on Social Networks, London, 1995, Conference Proceedings Vol. 2, (London, 1995).

[50] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, The Population History of England, 1541-1871, (Cambridge, 1989), p. 249.

[51] Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, p. 254.

one parent, it is likely that there would be less surviving siblings, perhaps none. The opportunity to maintain close relationships with siblings would depend on the extent to which siblings were able to find a living and a home nearby. With potentially small numbers of siblings, it is not surprising that in some situations, young parents did not have any brothers or sisters living locally. The presence or absence of siblings in the local community could make a large difference to the local availability of kin in middle age and old age. No siblings living locally would usually mean no nephews or nieces available either. People who were able to live near to their siblings and children, and develop good relationships with their nephews, nieces and grandchildren, were likely to be surrounded by kin in the later stages of the life-cycle.

Young people who settled in their home parish could act as supporters of their parents, in terms of practical assistance, even if they were not able to provide financially for them. They were also able to keep in touch with kin and friends, which may have been a major influence when deciding whether to marry a local person, if emotional bonds with parents, other kinsfolk and friends were strong, possibly stronger than the emotional bond in marriage itself. Lawrence Stone has argued that relationships within the early modern family were functional, and not primarily affectionate.[52] Theories of the emotional coldness of pre-industrial family life have their origins in evidence from the kinds of family where wealth was very significant in decision-making. However, it is dangerous to assume that the emotional experiences of some of the wealthier families of pre-industrial England were the norm for families of yeomanry status and below. Although the survival of the family depended on the acquisition of wealth at this level too, the means to live was not

[52] L. Stone, The Family Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, p. 88.

primarily provided by inherited wealth, but by hard work, good health, good management, and friends who were willing to help out when necessary. This 'social capital'[53] may have been more quickly built up by couples living within a community where they were well-known from childhood.

At the leaving home stage in the life-cycle, around the age of fourteen, [54] some young people got the opportunity to extend their social horizons of friends beyond their families and neighbours. Going into service or apprenticeship meant mixing with other young servants and apprentices from other parishes in the area; a chance to meet future marriage partners, or to make new friends who might introduce possible marriage partners. Positions as farm servants were normally to be found at the nearest market town, at the hirings. Farmers tended to come from within a radius of ten miles, to their nearest market town, to find suitable servants. This process of hiring servants meant that young people tended to move quite short distances, within a radius of the nearest market town, when they changed masters.[55] Apprentices, however, normally went to a town or city to learn their trade. Although they would hope to stay with the same master throughout their apprenticeship of seven years or more, being in a town or city meant that they were also able to meet other young people, usually apprentices and domestic servants who were also living away from home.

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[53] N. Lin, 'Building a Network Theory of Social Capital', Connections, Vol. 22, No. 1, (1999), p. 28.

[54] R. Wall, ' The Age at Leaving Home', Journal of Family History, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1978).

[55] A. Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England, (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 58-9, 72; P. Clark, "Migration in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century', Past and Present, No. 83, (1979).

The origins of the spouses of the young people who returned to their home parish to marry may provide some clues to the friends young people made when living away from home, as farm servants or apprentices, if their marriage partners came from outside the parish. Young people at the poorer end of the social scale were much freer to choose their own marriage partner than wealthy heiresses and sons of the gentry. However, money and parental approval were still important. It could be very difficult to get a home together without the transmission of resources from the parental generation, and household furniture and equipment from friends and neighbours. Help to get a house and some land, or a workshop was also often needed. Marriage partners who met with the approval of the prospective spouse's family were more likely to receive this kind of practical help, or the chance to live in the family home for a short time until a new household could be established. The origins of marriage partners can therefore only provide a minimum estimate of the networks of contacts which young people made while living away from home before marriage. Although some may have been allowed to marry those they courted while farm servants or apprentices, parents were likely to prefer spouses who lived locally, whose family reputation was known to them, provided they were from families who had a good name.

Surname studies have drawn attention to the tendency of large proportions of those who bear the same surname to live within a particular region for hundreds of years. Even today surnames can be traced to particular geographical areas.[56] David Hey has linked this to the sense of 'country', a home territory which was part of the concepts and vocabulary of the past.[57] This pattern of kinship settlement suggests than many young

[56] D. Hey, 'The Local History of Family Names', The Local Historian, Vol. 27, No. 4, (1997), pp. 10-11; P. Hanks, 'The Present-Day Distribution of Surnames in the British Isles', Nomina, Vol. 16, (1992).

[57] Hey, 'Local History of Family Names', p. 2.

people preferred to live in their home territory after marriage, rather than moving too far away. This could be interpreted as a desire to settle near other family members, or could indicate a preference for their home 'country', however this is defined. What could appear to be a strong 'family-land bond' where particular families remain on a family holding from generation to generation could equally be a desire to remain within the community of family, friends and neighbours which was known from childhood, in a landscape which was well-known.[58]

In reality, it was unlikely that all young people could marry and remain within their home parish, even if a desire to stay at home influenced marriage partner choice. There are a number of factors which affect marriage choices and migration at marriage. In seventeenth-century England these include the opportunities for land or other employment within the parish. Inheritance customs made it easier for eldest sons to set up home in their own home parish. However, the stability of tenancies for one group of people can make it more difficult for new families to move in, bringing new children into the parish. Opportunities for farm or other service could also bring prospective marriage partners into the parish; whereas systems of family labour could mean that few young people could come into the parish, and young people from the parish were less likely to get an opportunity to move away into service or apprenticeship. Families who lived in parishes where land tenure arrangements allowed many to stay from generation to generation may have found that a number of potential spouses were already relatives, and if close relatives, within the prohibited degrees of marriage.[59] Depending on the prosperity or

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[58] See G. Sreenivasan, 'The Land-Family Bond at Earls Colne (Essex) 1550-1650', Past and Present, No. 131, (1991).

[59] For an explanation of the categories of relatives within the prohibited degrees of kinship, see J. Goody, The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 134-146.

otherwise of families, it may not have been possible for some people to marry at the normal age (late twenties). Resources had to be available to set up a new household, and this may not have coincided with the opportunity to meet suitable marriage partners. The size of the population of the parish is also significant. In small populations there are likely to be fewer marriages between partners from the same parish (endogamous marriages).[60] Kinship density in a community is clearly affected by marriage choices. If a large proportion of marriages in seventeenth-century parishes were exogamous (i.e. they took place with people from other parishes) this would have resulted in a larger number of young people moving away from home.

The question as to whether family and household structure could be more kin-orientated in northern England was raised by Miranda Chaytor's provocative article in 1980, based on records from Ryton parish in County Durham.[61] The article questioned whether or not the nuclear family as a residential group was as normal as it might first seem in pre-industrial England. This emphasis, she argued, is partially a product of the Family Reconstitution methodology used by the Cambridge Group. However, Family Reconstitution reconstructs biological families, not household groups, and therefore can mask the existence of unusual residential household groups. In his research on the size and composition of the household, Laslett always acknowledged that some households included other people in addition to the nuclear family and servants, for various reasons, at different times in the family life cycle.[62]

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[60] See D. A. Coleman, 'The geography of marriage in Britain, 1920-1960,' Annals of Human Biology, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1977), p. 115.

[61] M. Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship: Ryton in the late 16th and early 17th centuries' History Workshop, No. 10, (1980).

[62] P. Laslett, The World We Have Lost - Further Explored, (London, 1983), p. 99.

The small number of what Chaytor suggests were unusual household groups in Ryton may have resulted from the special circumstances of Ryton in the 1590s. Chaytor's ideas, though not proved by her evidence, are nevertheless interesting. Perhaps the family household was more inclusive of others, in addition to the nuclear family group, in some areas of northern England.

1.5 Neighbourliness

Describing the politics of neighbourhood, Wrightson stated that ' "Neighbourliness", was one of the key words of early modern social relations - a critically important social ideal.'[63] He described the basis of neighbourliness as 'a reciprocity in equal obligations, the exchange of comparable services between effective, if not actual equals.'[64] Although there were clearly inequalities in wealth and status within communities, it was only the gentry which he singled out as operating as part of a more geographically widespread community of neighbouring gentry families. For those below the level of the county gentry, at village level, a good neighbour was someone who met practical community obligations, who did not cause trouble with other neighbours, and who was prepared to socialise.[65] In the politics of neighbourhood, however, community obligations could be very considerable in some situations. Being a good neighbour was very demanding, both in material terms, and in terms of generosity of spirit towards the limitations and failings of others. In order

[63] K. Wrightson, 'The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England', in P. Griffiths, A. Fox and S. Hindle (eds.), The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England, (London, 1996), p. 18.

[64] Wrightson, English Society, p. 51.

[65] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 51-57.

to investigate these obligations, we will consider the requirements of practical generosity, the problems of inter-personal conflict, and the culture of reconciliation which were features of neighbourhood life.

Felicity Heal's study of hospitality demonstrates the traditional neighbourly values which resulted in personal giving to the needy, as well as the sharing of food and accommodation with those who were effective if not actual equals. This had been an expected part of sociability at all levels of society, and between people of different social status in medieval times. However, she suggests that in the late sixteenth century, and in the early part of the seventeenth century, as gentlemen began to prefer the city to their country manor houses, and other forms of relief for the poor were developed, 'good hospitality was, in this world, more likely to become a matter of personal taste than of powerful social obligation'.[66]

Judith Bennett's study of help ales demonstrates the neighbourly charity which ordinary villagers could provide. A family in need could be encouraged to hold a help ale, by brewing, then inviting the neighbours to come and buy the ale at an evening party. The proceeds could be enough to help a family cope with a disaster, such as a house fire, which could otherwise have plunged them into long-term poverty.[67] The help ale also helped to foster neighbourly sociability.

Traditional expectations of neighbourliness are linked to Thomas' thesis on witchcraft in his far-reaching classic, Religion and the Decline of Magic. Thomas saw a conflict between 'neighbourliness and a growing sense of private property' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[66] F. Heal, Hospitality in Early Modern England, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 20, 117, 140.

[67] J. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', Past and Present, No. 134, (1992).

Obligations of neighbourly charity and sociability included providing food for neighbours and strangers, inviting neighbours to family celebrations such as christenings and weddings, and to funerals, childbirths, sheep shearings etc. If particular neighbours were not helped, or not invited to social gatherings, offence could occur. For individuals who already felt socially isolated, expressing any ill-will to neighbours could be a very dangerous action. Witchcraft prosecutions were usually between neighbours, often following a breach in neighbourliness. If a household suffered illness after refusing to help a neighbour who had come to the door to beg food, the illness could be blamed on the witchcraft of the neighbour who went away empty-handed, particularly if the household felt guilty for not helping.[68] Thomas notes that witch beliefs could also work to 'inhibit the expression of vicious feelings, and help to reinforce the prevailing ethic of neighbourliness and community solidarity', by providing sanctions against outbursts of bad feeling.[69] The link between witchcraft and neighbourliness, as outlined by Thomas, is evidence of the strength of neighbourly expectations of charity and sociability, and of the serious problems which could result from the breakdown of these ideals, where private interests became more important than community obligations.

Although historical debates on witchcraft have developed since Thomas's book,[70] the neighbourly obligations which form the backdrop of many witchcraft accusations in England have received little attention from historians. Annabel Gregory has analysed a witchcraft case in Rye as an example of what she describes as the 'social control' model of witchcraft.

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[68] K. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, (London, 1973), pp. 652, 660-1. See also, A. Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, (London, 1970), chapter 12.

[69] Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 634, 674.

[70] See for example, J. Sharpe, Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century Yorkshire: Accusations and Counter-measures, (York, 1992).

While accepting the arguments put forward by Thomas and Macfarlane about breaches of neighbourly charity, she argues that the case she discusses was just 'one episode in a series of factional conflicts in Rye'.[71] She also draws attention to the investment in social relationships which show themselves in ideals of good neighbourliness and community festivities. She suggests that when such social investments become unimportant in a society, witchcraft becomes insignificant.[72] Her arguments suggest that there may be a more complex link between neighbourly obligations and the incidence of witchcraft cases, and that further investigation of this link could be productive. However, even in a recently-published book entitled Witches and Neighbours, these kind of neighbourhood relationships are not discussed.[73]

Peter Rushton's article on witchcraft and defamation allegations in the Durham Consistory courts deals indirectly with the subject of neighbourliness. The cases which he quotes do not appear to include the kind of denials of neighbourly charity outlined by Thomas; most cases seem to have more connections with magical practices associated with folk-healing and possibly Catholic rituals. As far as neighbourliness is concerned, the defamation aspect of the cases is most interesting. Rushton concludes that a 'concern with good reputation runs through most of the defamation cases' which he studied.[74] In order to prove and defend their good reputation amongst their neighbours, Rushton shows

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[71] A. Gregory, 'Witchcraft, Politics and "Good Neighbourhood" in Early Seventeenth-Century Rye', Past and Present, No. 133, (1991), p. 50. See A. Macfarlane, Witchcraft, chapter 12.

[72] Gregory, 'Witchcraft', p. 63.

[73] R. Briggs, Witches and Neighbours, (London, 1996).

[74] P. Rushton, 'Women, Witchcraft, and Slander in Early Modern England: Cases from the Church Courts of Durham, 1560-1675', Northern History, Vol. 18, (1982), p.131.

how women in particular, were prepared to have the details of their personal arguments examined in public, and would bring forth witnesses specifically to testify that they were of good reputation. The Consistory Courts were inexpensive to use, and were therefore used by all sections of society. The large quantity of defamation cases handled by the Consistory Courts shows that reputation amongst the neighbours was something that middling and poor people were prepared to go to court to fight to defend, even if they could scarce afford the court costs.[75]

The verbal violence of defamation clearly caused serious damage to the ideals of good neighbourliness. Onlookers who initially found the gossip entertaining could later be obliged to take sides. This may be partly why such cases were taken to court, to publicly contend the accuracy of the allegations in order to try to prevent further gossip. Cases of physical violence clearly indicated an individual breakdown of neighbourly goodwill, but may have had less damaging repercussions in neighbourly relationships throughout the social community. In a society where violence was institutionalised in the punishments of the law, and where life could be painful and cruel for many sufferers of physical illness, casual violence may not have been treated very seriously, unless it was life-threatening. A spontaneous blow may even help to settle a wrong quickly, whereas a court case could prolong the dispute and possibly generate further conflict.[76]

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[75] DULASC, my survey of DDR V/ 8-12 and box 414, Durham Consistory Court Depositions 1604-1634. Details of the situations where defamation took place are perhaps the best indicator that the people involved in these disputes were often of low social status, servants, husbandmen, women ale house keepers, for example.

[76] I am grateful to Collette Jebb for raising this idea in one of my adult education classes. See also Wrightson's comments about reluctance to go to court in K. Wrightson, 'Two concepts of order: justices, constables and jurymen in seventeenth-century England,' in J. Brewer and J. Styles, (eds.), An Ungovernable People, (London, 1980) p. 30.

Lawrence Stone, in his argument about changing patterns of homicide, has discussed the problems of violence between neighbours. Until the seventeenth century, most homicides were between neighbours, in a world where most people carried weapons with them, even if this was only a knife for cutting food, or a pitchfork. Although the proportions of homicides to population has very clearly fallen dramatically between the fourteenth and the twentieth centuries, this fall was not necessarily uniformly steady. Stone states that evidence from Essex 'suggests that there may have been a ..... wave of violent crime, including homicide, in Elizabethan and Jacobean England'.[77] Possible explanations for this are given as the 'growing conflict and anomy in both villages and towns', which Stone believes could be indicated by the rise in the number of court cases, compared to demographic growth. He presumed this was 'as conflict between neighbours increased and as traditional means of arbitration collapsed'.[78]

Stone also draws attention to the shifting proportion of homicides taking place between neighbours, and between members of the family, between the fourteenth and the twentieth century. He argues that the proportion of homicides within the biological family has increased from about eight per cent in the fourteenth century, to about twenty per cent in the seventeenth century, and to fifty per cent in the late twentieth century. Barbara Hanawalt has taken this argument further, by pointing out that, 'if, in committing homicide, one is more likely to kill a person with whom one has close bonds, then the murder pattern among the peasants of medieval

[77] Stone, ' Interpersonal Violence, pp. 27, 31.

[78] Stone, 'Interpersonal Violence', p. 31.

England would suggest that they were more emotionally involved with their neighbours than with their families'.[79]

Richard Gough went as far as describing relationships between neighbours, when working well, as being 'loveing'.[80] The amount of inter-personal violence between neighbours in medieval times could suggest that a great deal was expected of this relationship, in terms of practical co-operation, help and charity. When expectations were not met, tempers could flare, and lack of self-control and the availability of weapons could lead to emotional outbursts of violence. However, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it has been suggested that the rise in inter-personal violence could also be linked to 'social disintegration and anomy'.[81] The two explanations do not match easily. Perhaps the truth lies in the difficulties which villagers faced in trying to cope with a changing world, where the obligations of neighbourhood were difficult to reconcile with a more outward-looking, increasingly commercial society. This theory fits with Thomas' explanations for witchcraft prosecutions between neighbours, where guilt about rejection of neighbourly obligations could be counterbalanced by blaming misfortune on particular neighbours through accusations of witchcraft.[82]

Conflict between neighbours was particularly troublesome to the individuals involved, as well as to other members of the community. Richard Napier's medical case notes of people suffering from mental illness in the seventeenth century, analysed by Michael MacDonald, show

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[79] B. Hanawalt, The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England, (Oxford, 1986), p. 257.

[80] Gough, Myddle, p.114.

[81] Stone, 'Interpersonal Violence', p. 31.

[82] Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 652, 660-1.

that conflict with neighbours was one of the stress factors which patients reported.[83] Feuding neighbours were also a problem for fellow neighbours, and conflicts could seriously interfere with the web of co-operative relationships of borrowing and lending money, labour, equipment, and food, causing stress and possibly distress. This explains why barratry (stirring up trouble between neighbours) was considered a crime which could be punished.[84] Collectively, these arguments suggest that getting on well with neighbours was a very important social value, but a value which was under threat from the economic changes taking place in the early modern period, and perhaps the greater orientation to the personal interests of the family rather than the community.

In medieval society, many neighbourly disputes could be dealt with by the manor court. By the seventeenth century many areas of the countryside were left with no localised institution to deal with this kind of inter-personal conflict due to the reduction of the functions of many manorial courts.[85] Only some offences could be brought to the parish constable, or the local justice of the peace, to be prosecuted at the quarter sessions, and only the better off could afford civil suits in Chancery. Many aspects of unneighbourly behaviour were therefore left to the community to try to sort out informally. Neighbourly regulation of behaviour could include the disorderly pageants of charivari, where individuals who had transgressed the moral code were given a public shaming, by being

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[83] M. Macdonald, Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England, (Cambridge, 1981), p. 105.

[84] G. Jacob, The Compleat Court-Keeper, (London, 1713), p. 34.

[85] M. J. Ingram, 'Communities and Courts: Law and Disorder in Early-Seventeenth - Century Wiltshire', in J. S Cockburn (ed.), Crime in England 1500-1800, (London, 1977), p. 113.

ridden backwards on a pole or horse, sometimes wearing horns.[86] Although some of these cases could have been punished by reporting the individuals at the next Archdeacon's Visitation, in some situations, neighbourly outrage required a more immediate punishment, without overstepping the law to engage in serious physical violence. Charivari could be much more satisfying than a penance, fine, or excommunication, particularly if the offender was unrepentant.

Richard Gough's History of Myddle provides many insights into the informal sanctions operated by neighbours.[87] Community punishments for annoying neighbourly behaviour are described in detail; a man who regularly stole sticks out of other peoples' hedges when out 'night walking' was dealt with by his neighbours, who hid a stick filled with gunpowder in the hedge. When he took the stick home to burn, it set his house on fire. However, neighbourly charity was extended to him; the neighbours helped to put the fire out. Gough also describes incidents which show how the law and neighbourly pressure interacted to cope with wrong-doing in the local community. When Richard Chaloner was in danger of being hung for stealing a cow from one of his kinsmen, his uncle offered to raise £5 from friends to pay for the cow, arguing that it would be a disgrace to have a kinsman hanged. The prosecutor dropped the charge and took the £5, only to find himself later forced to give the money back, on threat of being reported as taking a bribe to save a thief. In Myddle, it could be hard to find an acceptable compromise between community expectations and individual rights.[88]

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[86] M. J. Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', Past and Present, No. 105, (1984).

[87] Hey, English Rural Community.

[88] Gough, Myddle, pp. 107-8, 122, 176-7, 237.

Although the church authorities administered their own courts, the church saw going to law over secular matters as a breach of charity between neighbours.[89] Private interests were to come second to Christian responsibilities to settle disputes charitably, and to live at peace with all men (and women). The church took an active role in resolving conflict through offering arbitration services, and through regular reminders of the obligation to live in charity and goodwill with neighbours.[90] However, the church was not the only voice in early modern communities which argued the value of reconciliation. Friends, kin and neighbours could try to settle matters, and the process of binding over to keep the peace, performed by Justices, aimed to calm and diffuse conflict.[91]

Rogation services, with their processions around the parish boundaries, were seen as the time to admonish and charitably reform neighbours who had encroached on common pathways.[92] They were also an opportunity for the parish to join together in a community social event, led by the clergy. The grassman's accounts of St Giles' parish in Durham show payments for musicians, food, and drink for these perambulations on bounder day, which could help to develop neighbourly solidarity, as well as remind individuals of their responsibilities to protect the rights of others

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[89] 'Exhortation.... for the oversight of the bounds and limits of their towns', in J. Griffiths, (ed.), Two Books of Homilies, (Oxford, 1859).

[90] J. Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', in D. Baker, (ed.), Sanctity and Secularity: the Church and the World, (Oxford, 1973), p. 139; J. Sharpe, ' "Such Disagreement Betwixt Neighbours": Litigation and Human Relations in Early Modern England', in J. Bossy, (ed.), Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West, (Cambridge, 1983).

[91] Ingram, 'Communities and Courts', pp. 124-6; J. A. Sharpe, 'Enforcing the Law in the Seventeenth-Century English Village', in V.A.C. Gatrell, B. Lenman and G. Parker, (eds.), Crime and the Law, (London, 1980), pp. 112, 116-7.

[92] 'Exhortation.... for the oversight of the bounds and limits of their towns', p. 496.

from encroachments on their lands or privileges.[93] In the homily for Rogation, there are stern warnings of the evils of personal greed, which was seen to be the reason for encroachments on public space.

Neighbourly relationships can therefore be seen as resulting from obligations which included being at peace and being 'in charity' with fellow neighbours, being willing to join in community events which promoted goodwill, accepting the role of the church, the law, and the social pressure of the neighbours to resolve conflicts and correct unneighbourly behaviour. In addition, the traditional obligations of neighbourhood included hospitality, regardless of social rank, and required that the better off should help their poorer neighbours, by providing food, bequests of money, and loans when needed. No wonder these expectations were not always met, particularly as communities became more outward-looking, investing more of their 'social capital' outside the immediate neighbourhood.

1.6 The size and scale of social communities

Much of the discussion so far has assumed that social relationships between neighbours are conducted within a local community, but the size and scale of the neighbourhood community has not been clearly defined in historical studies. The 'community' which is defined for the purposes of historical study is often determined by the sets of records available, which were mostly created for administrative purposes. As Macfarlane has pointed out, the 'community' can easily be 'in the eye and methodology of the beholder', rather than based on the social relationships which link individuals and families together.[94]

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[93] J. Barmby, (ed.), Memorials of St. Giles's, Durham, Surtees Society, Vol. 95, (1896).

[94] Macfarlane, 'History, Anthropology', p. 634.

'Neighbourhoods' are probably easier to define than 'communities'. There is clearly a geographical element involved, a population, and a territory. Today, people would normally be described as neighbours if they live in the same row of cottages, village, or part of a city. However, a neighbourhood is not always a confined to a small geographical area; it is not simply a matter of distance, in yards or miles, which defines those who are considered as neighbours. In sparsely populated areas, people who live in surrounding farms could be considered neighbours, even over distances of several miles, whereas half those distances in a city would encompass a number of neighbourhoods. One explanation could be that neighbourhoods need a certain population size to function as a local social community; too large and they become impersonal; too small and they do not have enough members to share the roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a neighbourhood.[95] Rural, and probably much of urban England was very much a 'face to face' society in the early modern period.[96] Members of a neighbourhood community need to know sufficient about each other to gossip, to recognise strangers, and to be able to provide help with a variety of practical and social needs. The size of these social communities needs to be further investigated.

Charles Phythian-Adams uses the word 'neighbourhood' to describe a larger geographical area, based on 'community cores' which have shared interests and connections with neighbouring communities. In this context, it is the communities, not individuals, who are neighbours.

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[95] See J. DeSena, 'Women: The Gatekeepers of Urban Neighbourhoods', Journal of Urban Affairs, Vol. 16, No. 3, (1994); E. Roberts, Women and Families, (Oxford, 1995) p. 199-200.

[96] See arguments in chapter 3 of P. Laslett, The World We Have Lost - Further Explored, (London, 1983), and also Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society, chapter 9.

This is part of Phythian-Adams' argument for a societal approach to the study of local history, outlined in his introductory essay in Societies, Cultures and Kinship.[97] Rather than try to define a community by administrative or geographical boundaries, he argues that the focus should be upon the relationships which make up a social community. His research students' work, which feature in Societies, Cultures and Kinship, provide examples of the connections of kinship, marriage partners, and religion which help to define social communities and neighbourhood areas, according to Phythian-Adams' definition of neighbourhood. These networks could extend over wider areas than parishes, and could be evidence of local societies which are not clearly identified with a city, a single town, or a particular place.[98]

The social areas which Phythian-Adams describes would have had large populations, even in early modern England. They were far too large to have personal knowledge of the whole spectrum of people who lived there. Hey's definition of 'country' may be appropriate to describe the size of the territory where personal contacts with specific individuals could be maintained. Personal connections could sometimes extend over a wide geographical area, depending on the status, occupation or religious affiliations of the individual concerned. Gentry families often had many connections county-wide, through participating in county office-holding, and through family marriages.[99] However even below the level of gentry, villagers have been observed to have a range of contacts beyond their

[97] C. Phythian-Adams, 'Introduction', in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, (Leicester, 1993), p. 2.

[98] Phythian-Adams, 'Introduction', p. 21.

[99] Wrightson, English Society, p. 48.

home village or parish, usually within a radius of about ten miles.[100] The ten-mile radius, a day's walking, could be described as the geographical territory of social relations for people below the level of gentry, if they were not involved in long-distance travel.[101] Petty chapmen, for example, were likely to have a very far-flung range of contacts, as were travelling recusant priests.[102]

Phythian-Adams' ideas need to be tested using a multiplicity of social links, if they are going to confirm the existence of cohesive social communities which have a territorial element to them, rather than the personal networks of individuals who belong to special interest groups, such as members of non-conformist churches.[103]

The Christaller diagram published in Schurer's article on local history illustrates a model of settlements of varying size interrelating with each other.[104] The overlapping hexagons of the diagram illustrate the overlapping nature of local communities, illustrating relationships between market towns and surrounding villages, and between villages which may or may not have strong links with the same market town. Individuals could find themselves on the edge of a larger community at the same time as being central to a smaller community. Even in seventeenth-century

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[100] M. Carter, 'Town or Urban Society? St Ives in Huntingdonshire, 1630-1740', in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850, (Leicester, 1993), pp.85-86, 88-90, 99-102, 126; Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 77; Nair, Highley, p. 62.

[101] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 76.

[102] M. Spufford, The Great Reclothing of Rural England, (London, 1984), pp. 71-73; P. Caraman, (ed.), John Gerard, (London, 1951).

[103] Carter, 'Town or Urban Society?'.

[104] K. Schurer, 'The Future of Local History: Boom or Recession?', Local Historian, Vol. 21, No. 3, (1991).

England, there were few if any really isolated 'communities' whose members were not also part of other local social systems.[105]

It is impossible to recover all the social connections of people who lived in the past, because only a small amount of information about their social ties survives even in the best-documented localities. Therefore, Phythian-Adams' idea that local societies can be defined by social connections is an aim which can never be fully achieved. All that can be studied are series of partial networks, based on specific parts of the social world of the individuals concerned. However, these social networks could be used to identify sub-areas where there are greater numbers of different kinds of social links between individuals. In this way the size and scale of the local social community could be defined, based on the kinds of evidence which are available to the historian.

1.7 Sources, methods and investigations

The variety and quality of the sources which survive from Brancepeth make the parish a suitable choice for a community study focusing on social networks between households in the parish.

Good collections of surveys, deeds and other estate records survive, including evidence given to an enquiry about the management of the lordship and castle assets in the early seventeenth century.[106] These estate records provide detailed descriptions of the Brancepeth Lordship, including customs, and the values and terms of tenancies in the different townships of the parish. There are also a considerable number of

[105] Macfarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities, p. 9.

[106] These sources will be outlined in detail in chapters two and three.

documents which concern Brancepeth in this period among the State Papers. There is a good collection of wills and probate inventories covering the whole of the seventeenth century. Hearth Tax records survive, and a church seating plan provides evidence on social hierarchy. The parish registers are of very high quality. These sources will be described in greater detail in chapters two and three. In most of these documents, individuals are identified by farmhouse name, or by township.

The main deficiencies in the Brancepeth records are the absence of churchwardens' accounts, the limited survival of the accounts of overseers of the poor, and the poor survival of legal records. There are very few assize records surviving for Durham, and none which relate to Brancepeth.[107] The Durham quarter sessions indictments have suffered from damp, decay, and in the past were mixed up with other palatinate and church records.[108] A lot of the indictment rolls are missing. The quarter session order and process books give little useful detail on cases, and there are no surviving depositions or petitions. The Durham Chancery records have mostly survived, but in a rather disorderly state. The series of decree and order books provide useful summaries and judgements on the cases, but although these do not cover the whole of the seventeenth century, most of the gaps can be filled using the series of rough degrees and orders.[109] There are few cases in the Durham chancery concerning Brancepeth; the costs of suits in this court would have been rather high for the vast majority of the population of Brancepeth. The Durham Consistory courts were much cheaper to use, and the records include a small number

[107] Public Record Office, Deputy Keeper's Sixteenth Report, 1855.

[108] Most of the Quarter Sessions indictments are now with the main collection of later Quarter Session records at Durham Record Office; however, there are also stray indictments in the Public Record Office among the other palatinate records, and among the Church Commission papers in Durham University Library.

[109] PRO, Deputy Keeper's Sixteenth Report.

of cases from Brancepeth. Unfortunately, the detailed evidence provided by the deposition books only survives as a sequence until 1634, with some loose papers from later in the century.[110] Two diocesan visitation books contain Brancepeth material.[111] A small collection of Brancepeth manorial court records are available, although these are stray survivals rather than a full sequence of manor court records.[112] The appearance of Brancepeth people in the locally available courts is therefore far from complete.

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to reconstruct aspects of the social world of Brancepeth in the seventeenth century. Although much of the research uses the sources to produce quantitative evidence, the sources are also used to provide descriptive information about the parish. The methods used are mixed. The traditional tools of the historian have been used to reconstruct the history, religious culture, the economic fortunes, land tenure and farming patterns of the parish. The method of Family Reconstitution has been borrowed from historical demography in order to reconstruct the parish population as a series of biological family groups. The social network analysis techniques have been developed in mathematics and the social sciences. By bringing these approaches and methods together, more can be achieved than by using one method in isolation.

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[110] DULASC, DDR/V8 -V12 and box 414.

[111] DULASC, Dean and Chapter Post-Dissolution Muniments SJB/5, SJB/7, Visitation books, 1634-7.

[112] DCRO, Quarter Sessions; Brancepeth Estate Archives; C. Fraser and K. Emsley, (eds.), Durham Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1471-1625, Surtees Society Vol. 199, (1991); PRO, Palatinate of Durham records; Brancepeth manorial court records in PRO Special Collections; DULASC, DDR Durham Consistory Court Depositions, Church Commission Papers and Dean and Chapter Post-Dissolution Muniments.

Having discussed a number of different community studies which have already been undertaken by historians, it is clearly necessary to make an assessment of the kind of parish Brancepeth was in the seventeenth century. Could this study add to the debate known as the 'Terling thesis'[113] which concerns the religious, social and economic polarisation taking place in rural communities in the early modern period? Was Brancepeth more like Myddle than Terling, or any of the three Cambridgeshire parishes studied by Spufford? In Terling, most of the land was held by about ten substantial farmers, paying market rents for their leaseholds. The remaining land consisted of about half a dozen substantial freeholds, a number of smaller leaseholds, and a large number of small holdings which were freehold or copyhold.[114] There was an active Puritan group of substantial farmers, who were able, as local office-holders, to punish ungodly behaviour when it also contravened the criminal or ecclesiastical law. The inequalities in the wealth of households in Terling made possible a set of social relationships based on the power structure that these inequalities created.

Myddle was a place where wealth differentials were minimal. It was a parish of seven townships, a community with villages and isolated farmsteads, and a population which included families who lived from generation to generation in the parish. Myddle was largely made up of land which had been cleared from the forest, and was populated by farmers with smallholdings, used mainly for pasture. Hey notes that there were apparently no recusants in Myddle, or the surrounding parishes, and that Shropshire was 'little affected by dissent during the seventeenth century'.[115] This study may also provide some useful comparisons. Rather

[113] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p.187.

[114] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 28.

[115] Hey, English Rural Community, p. 223.

than look for other villages like Terling to test the 'Terling thesis', it may be more illuminating to test the amount of cohesion in parishes where Puritanism was not a significant factor in local social relationships, and where there was no evidence of very significant wealth differentials among the inhabitants.

In order to compare Brancepeth to other seventeenth century community studies, a number of factors have to be considered. Firstly, the geography of the parish, its size, settlements, administrative boundaries, land types, and visual landscape. Secondly, the background history of the parish, especially aspects of that history which may have had influence which extended into the seventeenth century, such as the pattern of land ownership. Thirdly, in a seventeenth-century study, the possible existence of strongly motivated religious groups needs to be assessed, and if found, to be acknowledged as potentially influential on the culture of the parish. These first three elements are primarily a descriptive exercise. The fourth factor, to make an assessment of the population size of the parish, requires basic quantitative methods, to estimate the size of the population at different dates, and to chart the patterns of population change shown in the numbers of baptisms and burials in the parish register. The fifth factor, to estimate the geographical extent of the wider social world in which the parish population were placed, requires a discussion of suitable indicators, such as the origins of marriage partners. The sixth factor, the employment opportunities and general standards of living in the parish, can be tackled using descriptive material. All these factors are discussed in chapter two of this thesis, in order to make it possible to compare Brancepeth with the other communities which have been studied in the seventeenth century, and to uncover evidence which could be relevant to the structure of the social networks within the parish.

This study uses the methodology of Family Reconstitution, in order to match individual baptisms, marriages and burials to family groups, to distinguish between individuals with the same name, and to trace the residence of family groups in particular neighbourhoods. The Family Reconstitution makes it possible to identify close biological links between nuclear family groups within the parish. However, because the period of Family Reconstitution was only one hundred years, most distant kinship links are unobtainable from this process.

Matching surnames are taken as evidence of kinship connections by geneticists studying historical populations in England.[116] In order to compensate for the shallowness of kinship links available from the Family Reconstitution, when discussing kinship in Brancepeth, surname matches are used as evidence of possible though unproven kinship links.

The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth has been done with the assistance of computers. Although the manual version of Family Reconstitution has been described in great detail by Wrigley, there is no comparable explanation available for the computer method.[117] Chapter three explains the process of Family Reconstitution using the computer method developed by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Because the Brancepeth Reconstitution was not

[116] See M. T. Smith, W. R. Williams, J. J. McHugh, and A. H. Bittles, 'Isonymic Analysis of Post-Famine Relationships in the Ards Peninsula, N. E. Ireland', American Journal of Human Biology, Vol. 2, (1990), pp. 252-3; D. Souden and G. Lasker, 'Biological Inter-relationships between parishes in East Kent: An Analysis of Marriage Duty Act Returns for 1705', Local Population Studies, No. 21, (1978).

[117] E. A. Wrigley, 'Family Reconstitution'; in E. A. Wrigley, (ed.), An Introduction to English Historical Demography, (London, 1966). See R. Schofield. 'Automatic Family Reconstitution: The Cambridge Experience', Historical Methods, Vol. 25 No. 2 (1992) for a report on this method.

done to provide demographic information, but as a basis for a community reconstitution, there was some modification of the method. In order to compare this study to other community studies, it is important to explain the method as it was used in Brancepeth in sufficient detail to enable a similar process to be carried out elsewhere.

One of the main criticisms made about the reconstitutable families derived from Family Reconstitution studies, is that they are not necessarily typical of the other families who reside for shorter periods in the parish.[118] Because the Family Reconstitution population is used as the basis for the social network analysis work, it is necessary to assess whether the reconstituted families in Brancepeth are representative of the families who lived in the parish during the seventeenth century. Chapter three uses the main sources on land sizes, wealth, poverty and social status to compare the reconstituted population with the non-reconstitutable population as they appear in these other parish records. The tenancy arrangements and land sizes, the probate records and the Hearth Tax assessments are also used to provide evidence on the economic background of the parish. It is important to know whether the Brancepeth population was highly stratified in terms of wealth and status; whether there were large numbers of landless labourers and a small number of wealthy yeomen, or whether the parish was made up of peasant-like smallholders with considerable security of tenure.

The key methodology which will be used to identify subgroups within the parish will be social network analysis. The term 'network' is used to describe the many links which can exist between people or between groups. Social network analysis not only deals with the personal

[118] D. Souden, 'Movers and Stayers in Family Reconstitution Populations', Local Population Studies, No. 33, (1984), p. 11.

contacts which an individual might have; it also includes methods of analysing whole series of interrelationships which occur within groups of people. It is a way of measuring the 'social web', as described by Rutman.[119]

Richard Smith, in his study of medieval villagers in the manor of Redgrave, Suffolk, used network analysis techniques to analyse interactions between kin and neighbours in the manor court rolls.[120] Since then, micro-computers have made this kind of quantitative work much easier to produce. Historians are, by now, mostly familiar with the possibilities of data analysis using databases, which are able to store attribute data, such as the address or occupation of an individual. Social network analysis programs are able to deal with relational data, i.e. links between records, such as kinship links between individuals. This methodology makes it easier to move from the general awareness of the complexities of the 'social web' which connected individuals in local communities, to mathematically quantifiable measures of inter-relatedness.[121] Social network analysis computer programs are already being used by social scientists investigating modern day problems, such as drugs networks and AIDS transmission.[122] This thesis will explore the possibilities of computerised network analysis with historical data, and will

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[119] For the general concept of the social web, see D. Rutman, 'The Social Web: A Prospectus for the Study of the Early American Community', in W. L. O'Neill, Insights and Parallels: Problems and Issues of American Social History, (Minneapolis, 1973).

[120] R. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours in a Thirteenth-Century Suffolk Community', Journal of Family History, Vol. 4, (1979).

[121] Rutman, 'Social Web'; J. Scott, Social Network Analysis: A Handbook, (London, 1994), p. 33; S. Wasserman and K. Faust, Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications, (Cambridge, 1994).

[122] K. M. McQueen, B. R. Edlin, S. Faruque, J. Von Bargen, and Y. Serrano, 'Geographic Networks and H.I.V. Prevalence among Young Adults in the Inner City, New York City, 1991-92', in M. G. Everett, and K. Rennolls (eds.), International Conference on Social Networks, London, 1995, Conference Proceedings, Vol. 2, (London, 1995) p.169-74.

work though the issues of adapting the principles of quantitative social science research to the requirements of historical records.

The computer program which has been chosen for the analysis in this study is Ucinet, which is widely used by social science researchers in a large number of countries.[123] So far, there has been little published historical research using Ucinet. John Padgett and Christopher Ansell's analysis of the political power of the Medici family in medieval Florence uses Ucinet to show the significance of their marriage and trading networks.[124] David Postles' article on personal pledging uses the program to assess the centrality of particular individuals in the personal pledging going on in Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire, using thirteenth and fourteenth-century manorial court rolls.[125] Chapter four will include a discussion of the development of social network analysis, and will provide a detailed description of the concepts and the methods used in this study.

The networks which are analysed in this study are based on the social relationships which can be traced from the historical records which survive from Brancepeth, and which refer to families who appear on the Family Reconstitution. Primarily, these are connections between testators and the witnesses of their wills, between appraisers of inventories and the families of the deceased, and between the lenders and borrowers of

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[123] S. P. Borgatti, M. G. Everett and L. C. Freeman, Ucinet IV Version 1.0, (Columbia, 1992); see D. Postles, 'Reviewing Social Networks: using Ucinet', History and Computing, No. 6, (1994); M. G. Everett and K. Rennolls, (eds.), International Social Networks Analysis Conference, London, 1995, Conference Proceedings Vols. 1-4, (London, 1995); See also Connections: Official Journal of the International Network for Social Network Analysis.

[124] J. F. Padgett and C. K. Ansell, 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 98, (1993), p. 1312.

[125] D. Postles, 'Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 26, (1996).

money, as shown in inventories. In addition, kinship connections recoverable from the Family Reconstitution, as well as estimates based on surname matches, will make it possible to assess networks of kinship between households.

Ucinet's routines can discover cohesive subgroups within a large network. Using multidimensional scaling techniques,[126] the program can also show inter-relationships between subgroups. These techniques will be used to discover the structure of the supportive social networks analysed. Similar techniques will be used to investigate kinship within the parish, using biological links shown on the Family Reconstitution, and comparing the results with possible kinship links based on matching surnames. The results of the analysis of these social networks will be reported in chapter four.

Mervyn James described the upland areas of County Durham as being characterised by 'strong family ties', and 'the persisting cohesiveness of the extended kinship group', where ' "neighbours" seem to count for little'. Elsewhere in Durham James saw 'neighbours, rather than the kinship group' as being who husbandmen, richer farmers and yeomen relied upon in the sixteenth century.[127] Chaytor's study of Ryton raised the possibility of a more kin-orientated lifestyle in Durham at the start of the seventeenth century. These suggestions need to be tested using more evidence.

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[126] See A. P. M. Coxon with C. L. Jones, 'Multidimensional Scaling', in D. McKay, N. Schofield and P. Whiteley (eds.), Data Analysis and the Social Sciences, (London, 1983).

[127] M. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, (Oxford, 1974), pp. 22, 24.

In Terling, neighbours were the main providers of social support in terms of practical assistance.[128] However, kinship links between households in Terling were low in number.[129] Where households did not have kin living nearby, in geographically small, southern parishes such as Terling, neighbours may appear to have fulfilled the role of substitute kin for many households. In large rural parishes in northern England, many families might be expected to have relatives living within the parish. In this situation, as James has suggested, neighbours might be less important. Neighbourhood relationships could perhaps be expected to be strongest in places where kinship links were low. The other possibility is that neighbourliness may also have been stronger in areas already dense with kinship ties, if a large number of families remained in the parish from generation to generation. Length of residence is likely to be a key factor in establishing relationships of support with neighbours. High levels of population turnover may have affected the quality of neighbourly ties as much as the availability of kin.

Brancepeth, as a large northern parish, provides an ideal setting for a discussion of kinship and neighbourhood networks. Families could often remain within the parish even when moving to a different area, thus remaining within observation for the purposes of this study. The pattern of kinship connections in Brancepeth can therefore add a little evidence to the subject of kinship availability in larger parishes. The pattern of social networks within the parish may also provide some indications of the strength of neighbourly ties.

[128] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 102.

[129] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, pp. 86-7.

Because the social networks to be analysed are based on different social relationships, differences between the structure of the networks could be expected. Kin might be evenly distributed throughout the parish, while appraisers of inventories are generally believed to have been neighbours.[130] The kind of people whom a family might choose as godparents could be different from the people the same family may approach when they needed to borrow money. However, all the social networks to be examined in this study could be described as likely to be socially supportive. It is therefore likely that there may be common patterns between them, if they are able to define local social communities. These investigations will be discussed in chapter four.

This thesis will consider the ideas raised by Phythian-Adams on the need to define a community based on the social ties which actually existed, rather than define a community by other definitions of administrative or geographical features. The size and geographical area of a social community might be affected by a number of factors, the individual circumstances of that particular community. Myddle seems to have been seen as a single social community in the eyes of Richard Gough, even though some parts of the parish had a different manorial history, and the parish was made up of scattered settlements.[131] Gough's book illustrates the amount of knowledge which could be built up about the pew-owning families who lived in the same area for a long time. It would be hard to imagine how Gough could have written about his parish as a community if there had been a much larger population and a faster turnover of families.

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[130] J. West, Village Records, p. 92.

[131] Hey, English Rural Community, pp. 2, 14, 19.

The number of families which are needed for a social community to flourish is likely to vary over time. In medieval society, the village seemed to be the basis of this community; in the early modern period, the larger unit of the parish may have taken over this role. In modern society, a 'community' is likely to contain many more households than an early modern community. Because of the social structures of medieval society, social contacts were mostly with other villagers, and conflict was clearly part of that community life.[132] The changes which took place in early modern English society, such as greater population movement, the growing market economy, and different religious affiliations, may have widened the social networks of many English villagers, making neighbourhoods less socially self-contained, and therefore less likely to be the arena for inter-personal disputes. It is worth considering whether neighbourhood relationships were, in some circumstances, actually becoming less intense, but more harmonious in early modern England, at the same time as conflicts were increasing in a less localised context.

The kind of social networks discovered in this thesis may be indicative of the extent to which Brancepeth was influenced by the processes of modernisation which were affecting the social structures of English communities between the medieval and the modern period.[133] Different kinds of communities are likely to have experienced the processes of change at different periods of their history, according to their type of economy, their proximity to towns and cities, and many other individual characteristics. The size and geographical extent of the social networks of Brancepeth families may provide some clues about the extent

[132] C. Dyer, 'The English Medieval Village Community and its Decline', Journal of British Studies, Vol. 33, (1994), pp. 420-1.

[133] See Smith, ' "Modernisation" ', for a discussion of this debate.

to which Brancepeth had experienced this modernisation process by the seventeenth century.

Chapter 2 Brancepeth Parish in the Seventeenth Century

2.1 The context

This community study has a much shorter chronological focus than many of the studies mentioned in chapter one. The purpose of this study was not to produce a history of Brancepeth.[1] The parish was chosen for the quality of its records, which could be used to analyse social networks, kinship and neighbourhood, not because Brancepeth had a particularly interesting or unusual political history. Nevertheless, as a Crown Lordship, Brancepeth did have a particularly well-documented history in the early seventeenth century. The 1614 inquisition, and letters in the state papers at this time include some first-hand descriptions of the parish which can provide a very vivid picture of the customs, religion and culture of Brancepeth as it was at the start of this period of study. The parish registers can produce reliable figures about population and marriage horizons, and the Hearth Tax records, the tithe book and the probate inventories can be used to describe employment opportunities and standards of living. All this is valuable evidence which can be used to interpret and explain the results of the network analysis.

The first section of this chapter deals with the visual landscape because this is likely to have influenced the distribution of population, travel between the settlements of the parish, and therefore the development of social networks. The second section deals with the ownership of the Lordship of Brancepeth, and the effects of changes in ownership on the tenure and customs. The third section discusses the

[1] The only histories of Brancepeth which have been written are small booklets about the village and the church. David Reid has provided an account of Raby, Brancepeth and Barnard Castle as Crown Lordships in the early seventeenth century, see D. Reid, The Durham Crown Lordships in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (Durham, 1990).

religious affiliations which were strongest in Brancepeth, and the possible cultural implications for social relationships. The fourth section estimates the size and turnover of population in the parish, and assesses the impact of this on the parish population. The fifth section considers marriage partners as an indicator of the wider social society in which Brancepeth people lived. The final section outlines the employment opportunities available in the parish, and evidence of consumer spending and levels of domestic comfort.

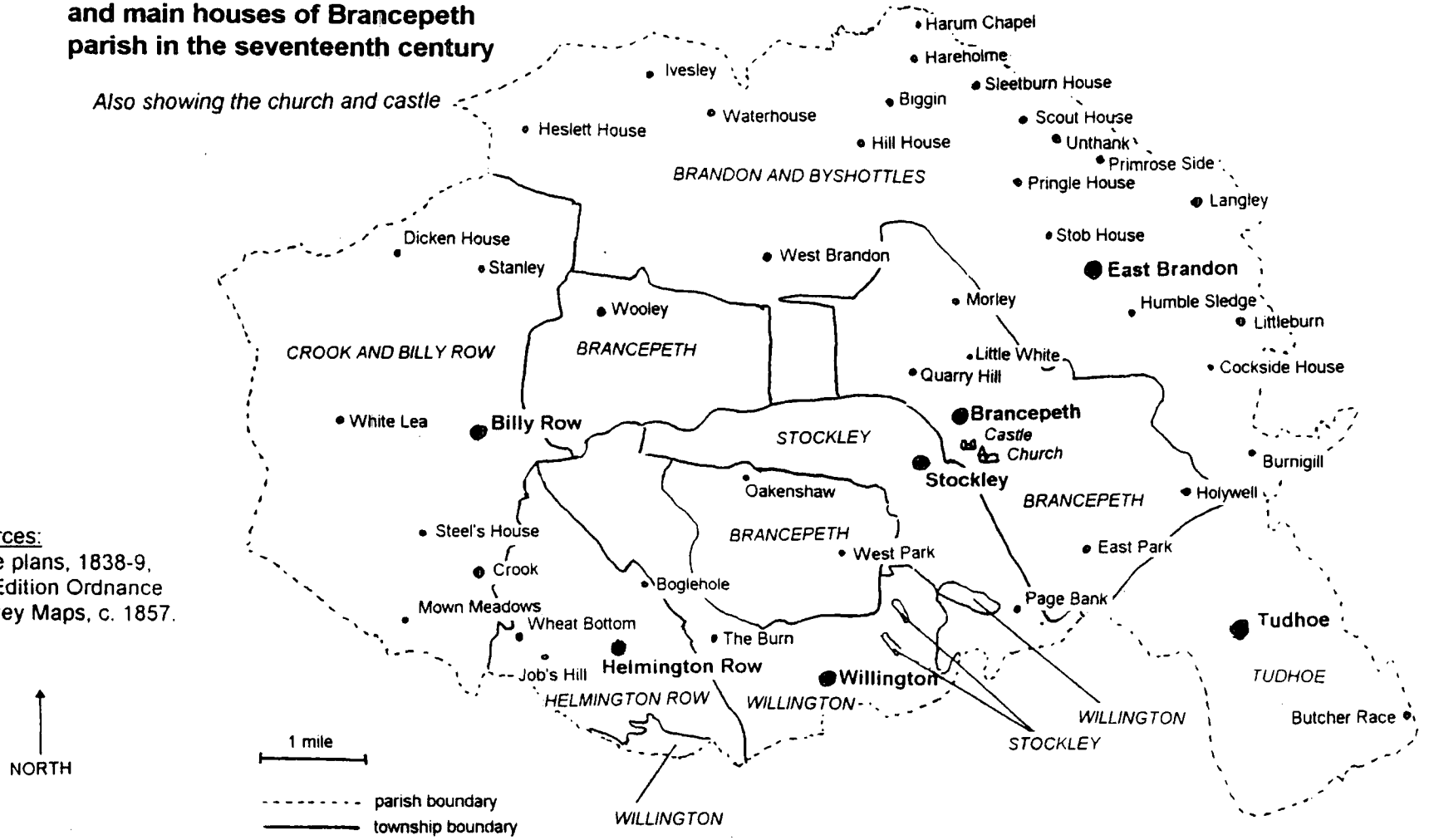
2.1 The Landscape

Brancepeth parish occupied a central position within the County of Durham, between the City of Durham and the Pennine foothills of Weardale. The thirty-one square miles of its territory contain a varied landscape, from river plain to land which rises to over 1,000 feet above sea level. The effect of landscape upon the people was likely to be about more than just the type of crops that could be grown. Landscape could aid or inhibit the development of sociability, through the visual barriers of hills, and the open aspects of valleys. In this section we will consider the parish as a visual landscape, in order to recognise which settlements would have been close enough to see their neighbours' houses and other villages or township lands in the distance, and to understand the subconscious effect of landscape in the formation of neighbourhood society.

This task will be tackled by taking a 'tour' around the parish, township by township, with the help of the two maps shown as Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2. In Brancepeth, the township boundaries often relate to the geographical definition of the landscape by rivers, streams and hill-top

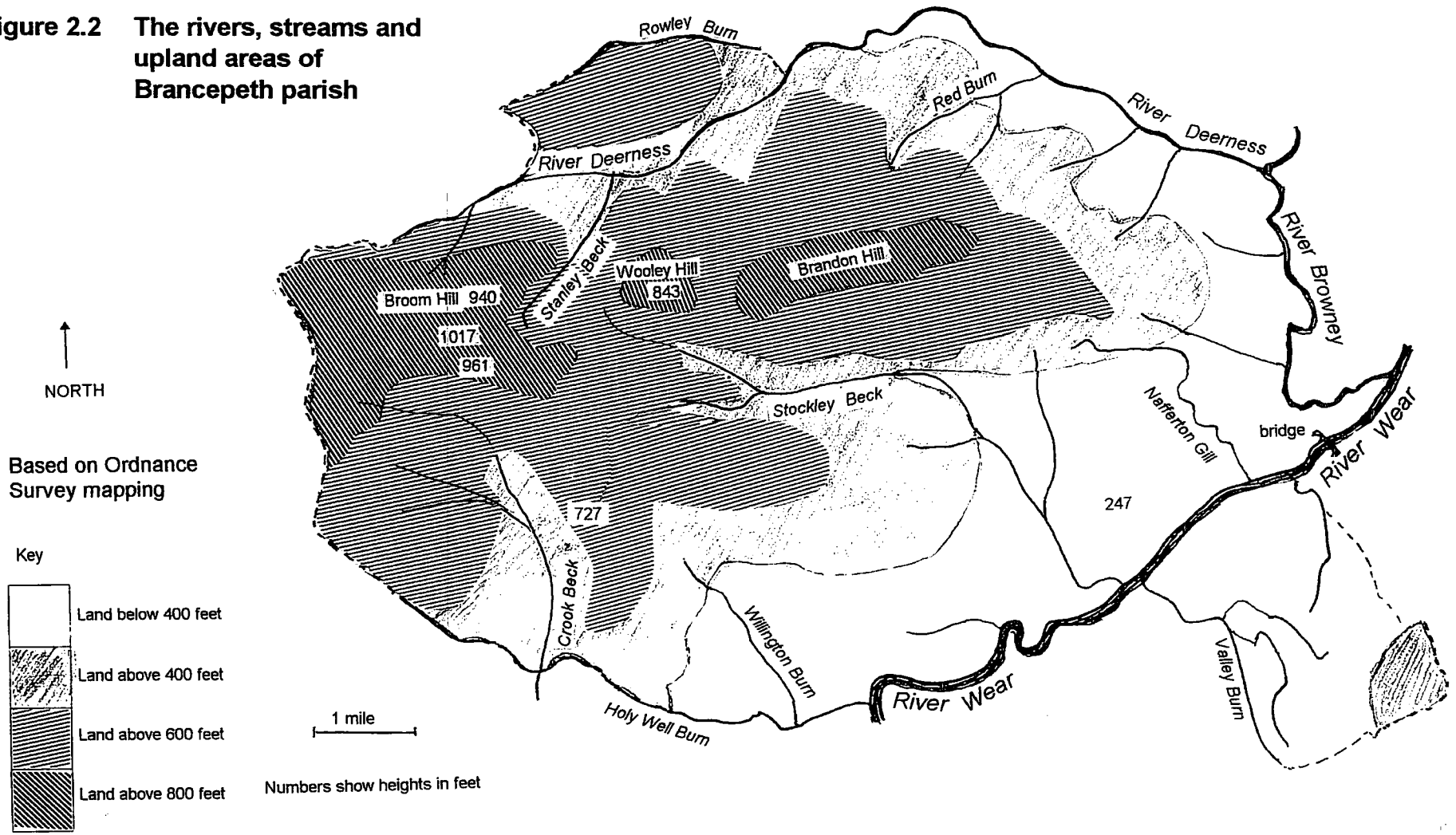
Figure 2.1 **The township boundaries, villages and main houses of Brancepeth parish in the seventeenth century**

Also showing the church and castle



Sources:
Tithe plans, 1838-9,
1st Edition Ordnance
Survey Maps, c. 1857.

Figure 2.2 **The rivers, streams and upland areas of Brancepeth parish**



areas.[2] Each township in Brancepeth had a focus of community life, in the form of a village, with some outlying houses.

Although there have been considerable changes to the landscape of the area since the seventeenth century, mainly brought about by coal mining, it is still possible to trace most of the seventeenth-century villages and farms on the first series Ordnance Survey maps, and on the tithe maps of the 1830s.[3] These maps have been used to draw up the map shown as Figure 2.1. Most of the farm houses shown on this map still survive today, although some of them are almost surrounded by nineteenth-century mining villages, or close to sites of restored land following open-cast mining operations.

By using eighteenth century estate maps, and documents which survive from the early seventeenth century it is possible to describe the parish in a way that it might have been recognised by the seventeenth-century inhabitants. The three documents which are particularly useful for this purpose are the 1607 and 1629 surveys of the Brancepeth Lordship, and the Brancepeth tithe book, drawn up and completed in the 1630s.[4] The 1629 survey of Brancepeth Lordship lists the names of the tenants by village, hamlet or isolated house. The acreage of the tenancy is normally given, and the number of pasture 'gates' (grazing rights) are included. The

[2] There are no surviving maps showing the township boundaries in the seventeenth century. The 1830s tithe maps have therefore been used. The settlements shown within each township on the tithe maps match the descriptions of farms in particular townships available in the seventeenth century records. DULASC Tithe plans of Brancepeth 1838-9, Brandon and Byshottles 1838-9, Crook and Billy Row 1839, Helmington Row 1839, Stockley 1838-9, Tudhoe 1839, Willington 1838-9.

[3] Ordnance Survey maps, scale 6" to 1 mile, 1st edition, c. 1857; DULASC Tithe plans of Brancepeth, Brandon and Byshottles, Crook and Billy Row, Helmington Row, Stockley, Tudhoe, Willington.

[4] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4, Survey of Brancepeth 1629; DCRO, D/Br/E77, Brancepeth Tithe Book 1630-9.

trees are counted and valued in each part of the lordship. The 1607 survey shows some additional information, including the location of different types of land, whether arable, meadow or pasture, and lists closes and garths, barns, houses and dovecotes.

The Brancepeth tithe book lists the names of household heads living and working in the parish, and therefore responsible for paying tithe. This very detailed tithe book shows each householder's occupation/status, and names the farmhouse, hamlet or part of the village where they lived. Sometimes the entries include extra notes, such as the number of sheep owned. The tithe book records the tithes paid or not paid by each household for the years 1630-1633. Tithes were paid in wool and lambs, hay, corn, cows, geese, pigs and bees, and only occasionally in cash rather than in kind. The surveys and the Brancepeth tithe book used carefully together, can therefore provide some very useful evidence on the visual appearance of the parish. The locations of farms, hamlets and villages, as identified in these documents, match well with similarly-named places on the later maps which are available, including the first series Ordnance Survey maps. These are the main sources which are used in the description of the parish which follows.

The map in Figure 2.2 shows the main geographical features of the landscape as they would have appeared to the casual observer. Riding out to Brancepeth from the City of Durham, seventeenth-century travellers would first see the parish from the medieval monument at the top of the hill known as Neville's Cross. The massive bulk of Brandon hill, the large ridge which ran east-west across the parish, would have been viewed end-on, stretching back into the distance, towards the Pennines. After descending a steep bank, and crossing the River Browney, the visitor would enter the parish of Brancepeth at its eastern edge. The visitor

would encounter lower flatter land, near to the river Browney, and depending on the route taken climbing the hill, may catch a glimpse of Littleburn, one of the most substantial houses and estates in the parish. Turning north, the traveller would arrive at the hamlet of Langley, to view a series of farms stretching out to the north west, and to the west would see the signs of a sizeable village nestling part-way up Brandon hill.

From Langley, riding towards the nearby River Deerness, at the northern border of the parish, the visitor might follow the course of the river, which was barely more than a stream, in order to take a closer look at the farmhouses. The landscape would have been punctuated by a whole series of these separate houses near to the river, and behind them, the backdrop of Brandon Hill. Farms such as Primrose Side, small estates of gentry families including Scout House and Unthank, and the farmhouse and water corn mill at Sleetburn, spreading along the southern side of the Deerness valley. Continuing westwards, the farms of Hareholme and Biggin, further away from the river Deerness, and part way up Brandon Hill, would have almost completed a tour of these Deerness valley settlements. The nearby village was East Brandon with its broad long street, shown to have thirty-three households in the tithe book of 1630, in addition to Brandon Hall. A stone's throw from the northern end of East Brandon village was Stob House, and behind it, Pringle House.

By riding along the wooded top of Brandon Hill, the visitor would have reached West Brandon, a house and farm of fifty-five acres, which occupied a very lonely position. The survey of the Brancepeth lordship drawn up in 1629 stated that there were 2,867 trees at Brandon, valued at £200, which were probably situated between East and West Brandon, and around the fields at West Brandon.[5] One of the nearest neighbouring

[5] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

farms, on a plateau on the north side of the hill, was Hill House, probably obliterated from view from almost every direction by the surrounding trees. In the survey of 1629, Hill House was stated to have 519 trees, valued at £50. The remainder of the western part of the Brandon and Byshottles township was also heavily wooded. The Waterhouse, built by the banks of the Deerness, about a mile and a half from Hill House, had over 100 acres of land, and 1206 trees valued at £57.10s. in 1629. This highly secluded, lonely spot, where one side of the wooded Deerness valley falls steeply down to the river, afforded considerable privacy for the people who lived there. An inquisitive visitor might have been told of the famous capture of a Jesuit priest at this spot. The nearest neighbours to this house, also on the north side of the River Deerness, but still part of the parish of Brancepeth, were at the house on the substantial estate of Ivesley, nearly a mile north-west of Waterhouse. The 1629 survey shows 1500 trees, worth £72 at Ivesley.

The most westerly township of the parish was called Crook and Billy Row, reflecting the two settlements of the township. Crook was little more than a collection of farms in the valley bottom, a worked-out coal mine, and a mill by 1629.[6] The households of Crook in 1630 numbered only twelve, including the outlying farms of Mown Meadows and Steels House.[7] Smaller still was the hillside village of Billy Row, at a height of about 700 feet above sea level. The tithe book dating from 1630 shows only eight households in Billy Row, and the fine sounding residence of Billy Hall. However, at the date of the drawing up of the tithe book, Billy Hall was not inhabited by anyone of gentry status. The land in this township rises to over 1,000 feet, and in places even today is still open

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[6] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

[7] DCRO, D/Br/E77.

heather-covered moorland. In the 1629 survey, fewer than 650 trees are noted and valued within the whole of the township of Crook and Billy Row.[8] Only a handful of households seemed to be able to make a living in this upland township; the other outlying farms listed in the 1630s tithe book were Dicken House, in the shelter of the upper Deerness valley, and the nearby hamlet of Stanley, which had three households living there in 1630. White Lea, in the western area of the township, is not named in the tithe book of 1630 or the survey of 1629, but is mentioned in the parish registers from the 1640s.

Adjoining the south east boundary of Crook and Billy Row township was the much smaller township of Helmington Row. In the parish registers, a large number of people are described as of Helmington Row, suggesting the existence of a village of that name. The present-day village of Helmington Row has a hillside position, and is mainly a long row of apparently nineteenth-century houses stretched along the main road between Willington and Crook. This is near the site of an older cluster of buildings, shown on the tithe plan of 1839, unnamed. This accords with William Fordyce's description in 1850 of a village which had almost disappeared.[9] There are still some older, less regular buildings behind the present-day terraced row which is now known as Helmington Row, but it is difficult to reconstruct any sense of what the settlement of Helmington Row would have looked like in the 1630s, when it had twenty-seven households, including the outlying farms of Job's Hill, Bogglehole and The Fold. Bogglehole is clearly named on the 1839 tithe plan, and stood north east of the cluster of buildings which are very probably the remnants of Helmington Row village. Job's Hill lies to the south west, occupying a

[8] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

[9] W. Fordyce, History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, (Newcastle, 1857), p. 436-7.

substantial hill-top position, overlooking Crook in the valley bottom, Billy Row on the opposite hillside, and Willington, near the river in the east. The Fold was to the south of the village, on lower land. The land in this township ranges from less than 400 feet above sea level, to over 600 feet on the top of Job's Hill, and nearly 500 feet at Helmington Row village. Although the township was not very heavily wooded, there were nearly 1,000 trees noted and valued in the survey of 1629.

The land drops to about 170 feet above sea level, on the plain beside the River Wear in the adjacent township of Willington. The old village of Willington was set on a plateau above the river flood plain, on the north bank of the River Wear. Nearby, to the north west, at a height of about 360 feet above sea level, was The Burn, a smaller settlement by a stream which is known as Willington Burn today. The Burn would have been close to Dere Street Roman Road and its junction with another Roman Road which continued northwards through Brancepeth village towards Brandon. The tithe book drawn up in 1630 shows twenty-nine households in Willington township; fifteen on the north side and ten on the south side of Willington village, and four farms at The Burn. The 1629 survey shows that most tenants had twelve acres or more; two tenants had estates of about forty acres. The survey of 1629 does not include any valuation for trees in Willington. The lower lying land, particularly near the River Wear, would have been better agricultural land than the tree-covered slopes of the Deerness valley, or the heather moorland on the hills above Crook. However, a visitor would have noted that in almost every settlement in the upland areas of the parish, some crops were being grown, although much of the land was used for pasture, mainly of sheep, with some cattle.

To the south of the River Wear was the township of Tudhoe, near to the Great North Road. Most of the population lived in the village of Tudhoe, which was in the centre of the township, on a large flat platform of land, which drops fairly steeply to the River Wear to the north. Only one outlying farm is mentioned; Butcher Race, on the Great North Road. The 1630 tithe book does not show the individual households in Tudhoe, because the tithes were collected by one of the villagers. However, the number of parish register entries for the early seventeenth century suggest a sizeable population in Tudhoe around 1630, and the Marriage Duty Act household listing of 1695 shows 59 households in the township.[10] The village today has many old cottages and farms, scattered around the edge of a very long, wide, village green. The tithe map of 1839 shows a similar arrangement. Visitors may have also been shown the coal mines, assessed for Ship Money in 1636 and taxed at 13s. 4d.[11]

A seventeenth-century traveller might be surprised to find that Tudhoe was part of Brancepeth parish. To get to church, villagers had to walk over a mile to reach the stone bridge near the hamlet called Sunderland Bridge, in order to cross the River Wear. They would then have faced a further walk of nearly three miles to reach Brancepeth castle and church. Even using the direct route, crossing the River Wear by stepping stones or using a rather dangerous ford,[12] the distance was nearly three miles. However, parishioners walking this route on a good day would have been able to see Brancepeth church and castle, half-way up the opposite hillside, as they walked down to the ford at the north end of Tudhoe village.

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[10] DCRO, D/Sa/E 963, Marriage Duty return 1695.

[11] DDCL, Hunter MSS Vol. 22 item 17, Ship money 1636.

[12] J. J. Dodd describes a drowning in the ford, in The History of the Urban District of Spennymoor, originally published 1897, (Spennymoor, 1992 edition), p. 89.

Taking the safer, drier route to Brancepeth via Sunderland Bridge would have brought seventeenth-century travellers from Tudhoe into the southern end of the township of Brandon and Byshottles. From Sunderland Bridge on the old Great North Road, Burnigill farm stands at the top of a sudden hill. In seventeenth-century documents it was often referred to as Burning Hill, suggesting it was a site for a beacon. Crossing over the small stream known as Nafferton Gill, into the township of Brancepeth, the route to Brancepeth church would have passed Holywell Hall, a stone medieval house.[13]

The central area of Brancepeth parish belonged to the twin townships of Stockley and Brancepeth. Stockley included a gently sloping stretch of land down to the River Wear, to the east of Willington township. In this area of the township, set part way up the hillside, was Page Bank, a small settlement of four households. The main population of Stockley township was concentrated in Stockley village, close to Brancepeth castle and village. Although Brancepeth and Stockley could have been described as twin villages serving the castle in the sixteenth century, nothing much remains of the village of Stockley today. However, the position of the old village of Stockley can be seen on plans drawn up in the middle of the eighteenth century.[14]

Stockley village was situated to the south west of Brancepeth Castle, in sight of the castle walls, separated from the castle only by the Stockley Beck. The settlement lay just to the south and east of the Roman Road from Willington Burn, and on the eighteenth century map, appears

[13] N. Pevsner and E. Williamson, The Buildings of England: County Durham, (Harmondsworth, 1983) p.120.

[14] DCRO, D/Br/P6, Plan of Brancepeth manor c. 1741.

to have been a series of houses and cottages round a lozenge-shaped wide village green. In 1630 there were five cottages described as 'by ye beck' in Stockley, seven farms and four cottages described as 'The farther side of ye street', and twenty-six dwellings under the heading of 'The nether side of [th]e street', making a total of thirty-five homes in the village.[15] The westerly area of the township, Stockley Fell, spread out below the slopes of Brandon Hill and the higher land of the West Park, which separated it from the River Wear.

Brancepeth township occupied three large sections of land in the centre of the parish. The West Park covered an area of high ground on the watershed between the River Wear and the Stockley Beck. It was overlooked by Oakenshaw, a substantial house which occupied a hill-top position on this plateau of land, which rises to over 600 feet above sea level. In the early seventeenth century, the West Park was heavily wooded, and was home to deer and game.[16]

Another detached portion of Brancepeth township, to the north, also covered an area of high ground, on the top of Brandon Hill, leading to Wooley Hill in the west, at a height of almost 900 feet above sea level. It contained the estate of Wooley. Today there is a substantial stone-built Jacobean-style house there. The position of the house is very isolated, but from High Wooley it would have been possible to look over to Stanley, on the other side of Stanley Beck, and to see Oakenshaw on the southern horizon, and Ivesley to the north. The long journey eastwards to Brancepeth Church would have involved passing the entrance track to

[15] DCRO, D/Br/E77.

[16] CSP(D), 1635, p. 113.

West Brandon, before descending to Brancepeth, with views over Stockley Fell towards Oakenshaw and the West Park of Brancepeth.

The main section of Brancepeth township incorporated the large village of Brancepeth, the castle and the church, and land known as the East Park. The East Park had obviously been wooded at the beginning of the seventeenth century; one contemporary commentator complaining about the quantity of trees which had been felled in the county by 1634, particularly mentions 'such woods as have bene cutt downe lately in the East Parke at Brauncepeth'.[17]

Travelling from Wooley to Brancepeth, seventeenth-century travellers would have been greeted by views of the castle battlements and the top of the church tower, over the treetops. Entering the main part of the township from this direction would have meant passing by Quarry Hill, an elegant Jacobean house today, and clearly a substantial house at least as early as 1663.[18] The village of Brancepeth consisted of two long rows of cottages leading up to the castle and churchyard entrance. In the tithe book, drawn up in 1630, the areas of the village are described as East Side, West Side of the Street, Parsonage Rotten Row, and Church Stile. There were six cottages and a farm described as Town Head. Near to Quarry Hill were the outlying farms of Littlewhite and Morley. A large population lived in Brancepeth village; twenty dwellings on the east side of the street, thirty dwellings on the west side of the street, seven dwellings at Town Head, and eighteen in the areas around the entrance to

[17] DDCL, Hunter MSS. Vol. 44 No. 6, A.L.(author otherwise anonymous), Certain Observations Touching Ye Estate of the Common-Wealth composed principally for the Benefitt of the County of Durham, 1634.

[18] DULASC, Inventory of Edward Colston of Quarry Hill, 1663.

the castle and church, described as Church Stile and Parsonage Rotten Row. The village contained seventy-five households in the tithe book.

A survey drawn up in 1570 begins with a description of Brancepeth:

> 'The castell of Brannspeth ys buylded all of stone wth two wards and covered wth leade and ys of no strngthe, but ageynst the manner of that countrey warrs and ys but a small house and of no great receypt and standyth wthin a playne countrey betweene two parkes and on the south of a vyllage wch ys buylded all in lengthe in one streete, the buyldying very meane and for the most men of occupacon mayntened onely by therles who for the most parte made there abode at that Castlell'.[19]

Despite the description of the castle as no great fortress, it would have looked very imposing, particularly when viewed from the south, on the plateau-like site, above the Stockley Beck, against the backdrop of Brandon Hill. The castle had an extensive curtain wall, with a series of rectangular towers, and a large central courtyard.[20] The site was part naturally moated, with the land falling down to the Stockley Beck to the south.

However imposing the views of the castle might have been from a distance, on closer inspection, in the early seventeenth century, the castle had an air of decay about it. Villagers complained that the 'sweet

[19] PRO, E/164/37, Survey of Brancepeth 1570, fol. 293.

[20] Pevsner and Williamson, Durham, p. 117-8.

walks and pleasant harbours' were quite gone to rack and ruin since the departure of the Earls of Westmorland.[21]

The parish church, by the middle of the seventeenth century, would have been of great interest to visitors, as it had been recently modernised by new oak carved pews of a uniform nature, and beautified by a carved pulpit and font cover.[22] The old Neville chantry adjacent to the south aisle, and the wooden and stone effigies of former Nevilles would have been reminiscent of the former glory of this church, as the estate church of such a powerful family, and as the parish church for all the townships of Brancepeth.

The boundaries of the large parish of Brancepeth encompassed a wide variety of scenery, from flat areas of land on the plain of the River Wear, to the high open moorland extending into the Pennine foothills. Most of the land could be described as hilly rolling countryside, which in the early seventeenth century, would have been open commons, heavily wooded in many places, and in the villages, divided into small garths behind cottages. It was mainly farmed in open fields and small closes, apart from the few gentry estates. At the centre of the parish was the castle which had once been the home of the most powerful lay landholder in Durham, the Earl of Westmorland, and beside the castle was the parish church, which brought parishioners together from all parts of the parish for church services. On either side of the church and castle were the two villages of Brancepeth and Stockley, together forming the largest concentration of households in the parish. The rest of the population were

[21] DCRO, D/Gr/354, Copy of inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship.

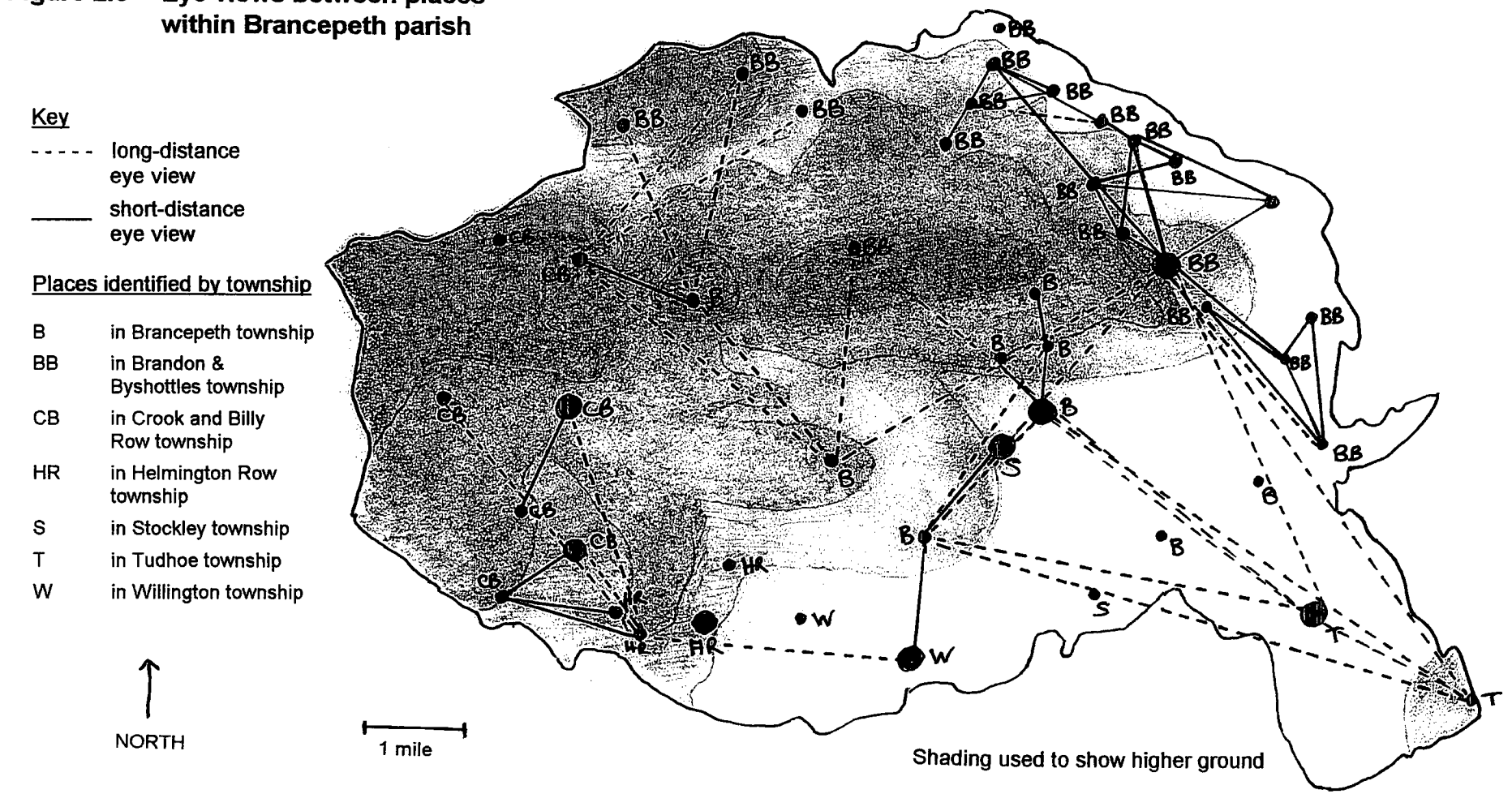
[22] William Milburn's letter to John Cosin, 1638, in G. Ornsby, (ed.) The Correspondence of John Cosin Part 1, Surtees Society Vol. 52, (1869), p. 221-3. Pevsner and Williamson, Durham p. 115.

distributed throughout the other townships, in villages, or in the individual farmhouses which were to be found in every part of the parish, although more noticeably so along the line of the Deerness valley.

Although the landscape was clearly very varied, from several high ground vantage points, almost the whole of the parish could be viewed. From Butcher Race, on Spennymoor, it is possible to see right into the parish, to the horizon of Brandon Hill. From Oakenshaw, there are views of East Brandon, West Brandon, Wooley, and even as far as Stanley. From Wooley, Ivesely can be seen. These long-distance views link what might otherwise seem separate areas into one 'country', consisting of the main land of the lordship of Brancepeth, places which could be sighted from the central hilltop area of Brandon Hill.

Figure 2.3 shows some of the short and long-distance eye views in Brancepeth parish as they can be seen today. Many of the settlements in the township of Brandon and Byshottles overlooked each other, and could see the village of East Brandon. Some of the farms around Brancepeth village could see each other, but because Brancepeth is situated in a lower position than East Brandon, smaller hills can easily mar the view to farms which are close by. In the saucer-like valley bottom near Crook, neighbouring farms can be seen on opposite hillsides. Job's hill seems to form a common vantage point for Crook and Billy Row, and down into Willington. But other places, including Willington, which was low-lying, have few visual links. Most of the villages of the parish were situated in more sheltered areas. As the 'capitals' of their townships the people living in them could look at large amounts of the land in their township, stretching up towards the watersheds or down to the streams which formed some of the dividing points between their land and land in the neighbouring townships. In our own society we are aware of the

Figure 2.3 Eye views between places within Brancepeth parish



psychological effects of the visual environment on urban living. In the past, rural people needed to know their landscape in order to travel within their 'country', at least as far as the main roads. For a people who lived much more of their lives outdoors, the visual effect of the landscape, the 'eye to eye' of neighbourhood may have been significant in the maintenance of social communities.

2.3 The Neville legacy in Brancepeth

In this section, the changes in manorial ownership of Brancepeth, and the effects of these changes on the tenantry of Brancepeth will be considered. Brancepeth had been a place of great significance in the times of the Nevilles. How much did this history affect everyday life and social relationships in Brancepeth in the century following the downfall of the Earls of Westmorland?

The parish of Brancepeth was within the Lordship of Brancepeth. Most of the parishioners were therefore tenants of the Brancepeth Lordship, which also covered other areas of Durham, beyond the boundaries of Brancepeth parish. The Lordship of Brancepeth had been one of the chief estates of the Neville family, the Earls of Westmorland. Brancepeth Castle had originally belonged to the Bulmer family, who were of Saxon origin. When the female heiress Emma Bulmer married Geoffrey Neville of Raby, at the end of the twelfth century, the Nevilles became Lords of Brancepeth and Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire, and in the thirteenth century, added the Lordship of Raby in County Durham to their assets. In the fifteenth century the Durham branch of the Neville family lost the wealth of the family's Yorkshire estates, which were settled on the issue from the second marriage of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, to Joan, daughter of John of Gaunt. However, the Durham branch of the family,

who descended from Ralph Neville's first marriage, retained the title of Earls of Westmorland, and were the most powerful lay landlords in County Durham.[23]

Brancepeth was lost by the Neville family as a result of their leadership in the Northern Rebellion against Elizabeth I in 1569.[24] After the failure of the rebellion the attained Charles Neville escaped to France, where he lived in exile until he died. His wife and family were left in Brancepeth, but the estate and castle became the property of Queen Elizabeth.

For many years the castle was stewarded and the proceeds provided useful Crown revenue. In 1613 James I granted the castle to his favourite, Robert Carr, who married Frances Howard. However, shortly after the castle was granted to him, Robert Carr fell from power as a result of being associated with the suspected poisoning of Thomas Overbury in the Tower of London. Consequently, the Lordship of Brancepeth reverted back to the Crown.[25] In 1627 Sir Henry Gibb was granted the castle and parks of Brancepeth for £2,442 and fee-farm rent of £40 per year.[26] In 1627 trustees of the Citizens of London became the owners of the remaining lands of the Lordship, along with other Crown lands, as part of an agreement to pay off interest from previous royal debts, and to enable the king to borrow further amounts of money from the City of London.[27]

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[23] R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, (Vol. 4, Durham, 1840), p.151-162.

[24] See D. Marcombe, 'A Rude and Heady People: the Local Community and the Rebellion of the Northern Earls,' in D. Marcombe, (ed.), The Last Principality, (Nottingham, 1987).

[25] CSP(D), 1611-1618, pp. 329, 398.

[26] Reid, Crown Lordships, p. 50.

[27] Reid, Crown Lordships, p. 48-9.

The 1629 survey of the Brancepeth Lordship was drawn up to establish the value of the City of London's financial asset, ready for resale.[28]

Dame Ann Middleton, widow of a London Alderman, purchased Brancepeth and Stockley, Edward Cropley bought East Brandon, and Linley Wren of Binchester in County Durham, with a London associate, bought land in Crook, Billy Row, and Helmington Row. These lands were almost all sold on quickly, with the exception of East Brandon. In 1636 Ralph Cole bought the manors of Brancepeth and Stockley from Dame Anne Middleton, and in 1637 bought Brancepeth Castle and the East and West Parks of Brancepeth from William D'Arcy of Hornby Castle in Yorkshire, who had bought them from Sir Henry Gibb.[29]

This left the Cole family as the largest landowner in Brancepeth parish for the rest of the seventeenth century. Ralph Cole was the grandson of a Gateshead tradesman, whose family had risen to prosperity from the ranks of blacksmiths through investments in the Tyneside coal industry. Ralph Cole had become Sheriff of Newcastle (1625-6) and mayor of the town in 1633. This clearly non-aristocratic Lord of the Manor took up residence in the castle, and shortly after reinstated the manorial court, even trying to claim the right to stray animals because the right had belonged to his predecessor, the Earl of Westmorland.[30] The large gap in time between the departure of the Earls of Westmorland and the arrival of Ralph Cole, was at least equalled by the cultural divide between the two very different resident Lords of the Manor. However, Cole evidently tried to carry on some of the traditions of the Nevilles, who had killed wild cattle

[28] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

[29] Reid, Crown Lordships p. 54.

[30] DCRO, D/Br/E1, Brancepeth Manor Court Book 1641-2; DULASC, Church Commission 220751, 221078, 221080-3, Durham Bishopric Estates 1636.

for the poor each year. Mr Cole, who remained an active investor in the Tyneside coal industry, sent cash instead. In 1638 the curate, William Milburn wrote to the rector John Cosin,

> 'We like well our new lord, Mr Cole, for his liberalitie to the poore. Hee sent at Christmas 20s for them, and other 20s at Easter: and yesterday (the Court being at Branspeth) hee gave me 10s to be distributed among them'.[31]

The new Lord of Brancepeth was a welcome change from the people who had been in charge of the castle and lordship during the period of Crown ownership.

The Cole family do not seem to have taken every opportunity to recoup the vast sums of money they spent buying Brancepeth Castle and estate, certainly in the first forty years of their ownership.[32] However, by the 1670s, Sir Ralph Cole began to mortgage parts of the estate to outsiders, possibly to help to pay for his passion for art. Sir Ralph took painting lessons from Van Dyke and became a creditable artist himself, as well as patronising other artists.[33] By the 1680s he was selling off the parts of the estate piecemeal, though mainly to financiers, with the leaseholders as sitting tenants.[34] Because of financial problems, the

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[31] Fordyce, Durham, p. 430; Ornsby, (ed.), Correspondence, Part 1, p. 222.

[32] The cost was £5,100. DCRO, D/Br/E33, Schedule of Deeds of the Manor of Brancepeth 1627-1727.

[33] DNB, Entry for Sir Ralph Cole (1625-1704).

[34] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue, Deeds section.

castle and estate was sold to the Bellasis family, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, after Sir Ralph died.[35]

Brancepeth had been a Lordship without a resident lord for nearly seventy years before the arrival of the Cole family. In that time, the parish families had to deal with Crown officers. The first constable of the castle was George Freville, who was granted the office in return for his services in putting down the 1569 rebellion. In 1592 Henry Sanderson took over the position of constable of Brancepeth castle. Despite being much complained about, Henry Sanderson with his son Samuel continued as constable of the castle until it passed out of Crown ownership in the 1630s, when they reluctantly had to leave, demanding compensation for the loss of the position.[36]

The stewardship of the lands belonging to the Brancepeth Lordship passed through a number of hands, including those of William Bowes, Sir Charles Wren, Thomas Emerson (Robert Carr's steward), and Sir Henry Vane.[37] In practice, the bailiffs did much of the administrative work of the lordship, collecting rents and serving writs. These offices were held by Mr Lee of Brandon, ex-retainer of the Earl of Westmorland, and his son-in-law, Mr William Conyers of Wooley, who would therefore be well-known to the tenants of Brancepeth.[38]

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[35] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue, Deeds section, No. 244; D/Br/F57, Sale of goods at Brancepeth 1707.

[36] CSP(D), 1635-6, p. 24.

[37] Reid, Crown Lordships p. 25-7.

[38] Reid, Crown Lordships, p. 28. See also will of Henry Neville, 1563, in W. Greenwell, (ed.), Wills and inventories from the registry at Durham Part 2, Surtees Society, Vol. 38, (1860), p. 4.

The period between the departure of the Nevilles and the arrival of the Coles had been a difficult time for the tenants of Brancepeth. Unused to non-resident landlords, the population had to endure the imposition of outsiders who came to Brancepeth in order to exploit its resources, not to maintain local community in the style of the Nevilles. Complaints against the resident constable, Henry Sanderson eventually resulted in an inquiry on behalf of the Court of the Exchequer, taken in Durham, and headed up by Sir Henry Anderson, in 1614.[39] This document provides a fascinating insight into the privileges and duties of the tenants in the times of the Earls of Westmorland, and into the decay of these privileges and duties since the attainder of the last Earl. The answers to the enquiry also provide copious details of Sanderson's abuses of power. The document concentrates on the felling of valuable timber, and on hunting of the deer in the parks of Brancepeth, both of which were in effect stealing Crown assets and privileges, and therefore likely to be of interest to the Court of the Exchequer. However, the evidence produced also creates a vivid picture of the lordship of Brancepeth in the early seventeenth century, and helps to show the extent to which the medieval culture of the Nevilles was still relevant to the tenants by the seventeenth century.

From the depositions accompanying the enquiry, it is clear that a number of older men could remember back to before the time of the 1569 rebellion. Thomas Lonsdale of Helmington Row, aged eighty-four, gave evidence on the rights and duties of the tenants before the attainder of the Earl, speaking 'all of his owne remembrance for seventy years'. He was also able to draw on what he had heard his father say, and what 'other ancient men of this countrie report'. Thomas Lonsdale's own memory could have therefore recounted events happening in the mid-sixteenth

[39] DCRO, D/Gr/354 and D/Br/E44, Inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614.

century; and by adding selected memories from his father, his knowledge could have stretched back to the early sixteenth century.[40]

In 1614 Thomas Lonsdale, along with John Rippon of Primroseside, aged eighty or thereabouts, Ralph Douthwaite of Willington, aged about fifty-eight, and Peter Elseworth of Helmington Row, aged about sixty-four years, all gave evidence on aspects of life in the lordship of Brancepeth in the times of the Nevilles. The powers of the Lord of the Manor, as chief lay landowner in County Durham, had evidently been great. The Lord of Brancepeth had rights to stray animals, and the forfeited goods of felons within his lordship. The manor court of Brancepeth dealt with debt cases between tenants up to the value of forty shillings, and fined tenants twenty shillings for taking their cases to any other court. The sheriffs of the county could not serve warrants directly on the tenants of the Lordship; they had to be given to the Earl of Westmorland's bailiffs to execute within the Lordship of Brancepeth. Thomas Lonsdale recounted an incident which he had been told of which concerned a sheriff's bailiff who entered the lordship to serve a process (a legal summons). He was apprehended by the Earl of Westmorland's officers and tenants, and made to eat the process, then 'set upon his horse with his face backwards towards the horses tail and so sent away out of the lordship'.[41] This show of strength used some of the metaphors of charivari, to punish and rebuke the sheriff's bailiff, and the Bishop, indirectly, for attempting to undermine the powers of the manorial officers of the Earl of Westmorland.[42]

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[40] DCRO, D/Br/E44.

[41] DCRO, D/Br/E44.

[42] See M. J. Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', Past & Present, No. 105, (1984), for a discussion of charivari.

The tenants of the manor were bound together in shared privileges which included freedom from tolls at Durham, Auckland, and Newcastle, and in their rights to get cheap coal from coal mines at Hargill, near Witton-le-Wear, part of the Bishop of Durham's land in the parish of Auckland St Andrew, at only fourpence a wain load. The tenants of Brancepeth were also obliged to fulfil various duties and services to the Nevilles. The tenants of East Brandon were to provide coal for the castle, and the other tenants of the lordship who paid rents of forty shillings and under, provided hay, being paid an allowance of eight pence an acre for mowing the hay, and six pence for making and carrying the hay to the castle. Tenants whose rents exceeded forty shillings had to provide the wood for timber, rails, posts and fencing, without being paid any allowance for providing this service.[43]

These obligations and privileges, and regular meetings of the Court Leet and Court Baron, would have made manorial life an important focus of community sociability for the inhabitants of Brancepeth parish, and would also have encouraged shared interests with other parts of the lordship which were beyond the parish boundaries, but close by, such as Helm Park (south of Helmington Row), Whitworth (to the west of Tudhoe), Hedley and Cornsay (to the north of the river Deerness, east of Ivesley), and Byers Green, (on the south side of the river Wear, in sight of Willington). These places all feature in the social connections of Brancepeth parishioners in the seventeenth century.

By the time the inquiry of 1614 was made, the tenants of the Brancepeth Lordship had experienced the decay of their rights and privileges. They were no longer getting such cheap coal at the Hargill coal

[43] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

pits, and were now having to pay six pence per wain load. Thomas Lonsdale reported that the undertenants of the Bishop,

> 'about five or six years since would have enforced them to have paid eight pence the load, which the tenants of the said Lordship of Brancepeth would not be drawn unto, whereupon divers of them going with their waines together and offering to load them for six pence the load they were forcibly resisted by the tenants of the said coal pits and many blows and some hurts were given on both sides, but since that time they have quietly enjoyed it according to the first enhancement of six pence the load'.[44]

The tenants appear to have had less success in fighting the erosion of their rights to free tolls at Durham and Auckland. Thomas Lonsdale reported that since the attainder of the Earl of Westmorland, the tenants 'have been denied their said freedom and by little and little utterly debarred thereof'. Thomas Mayor and Ralph Douthwaite, both aged fifty-eight, agreed with Thomas Lonsdale's statement, adding that, 'And for toll when it began first to be demanded, they refused to pay, and were suffered so to pass.' John Rippon, aged eighty or thereabouts, from Primroseside near East Brandon, ventured to suggest that the tenants should have offered more resistance to the imposition of tolls. He said that the tenants 'have been by degrees denied the said liberty and freedom and as he thinketh by their own weakness in this behalf are now

[44] DCRO, D/Br/E44.

alltogether debarred thereof.'[45] The tenants were in a weak position without the protection of the Earls of Westmorland.

The rights and privileges of the tenants which were remembered by the older men of Brancepeth in 1614 were part of the old world of almost medieval affinity to the powerful house of Neville. The Nevilles had traditionally headed the Bishop's palatine army, defending Durham and England against the Scots, and the bishops of Durham no doubt felt quite dependent on the local leadership provided by the Earls. After the attainder of the Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland, no noble family moved in to fill that vacuum of power, and after the union of the Scottish and English Crowns in 1603, the need for border service diminished. By the early seventeenth century, the balance of power in Durham was very firmly in the hands of the Bishop, and this was obviously exploited by the undertenants in the Hargill coal pits, and by the collectors of tolls in the Bishop's manor at Auckland and the City of Durham.

From the depositions of the witnesses, it would appear that the older tenants regretted the loss of special legal status, as well as the loss of privileges. The tenants of the Brancepeth Lordship had not been obliged to attend the assizes and sessions of the peace held in Durham, and could not have processes served directly upon them by the Sheriff's officers. Tenants seemed to prefer the old system of sorting out small debts in the manorial court. Ralph Douthwaite clearly regretted the loss of this custom, which he thought 'by the negligence of the officers for the time being within the said manor, the privilege and custom aforesaid hath been remissly omitted'. These depositions give a clear sense of the dissatisfaction of the tenants with the loss of the customs and life-style

[45] DCRO, D/Br/E 44.

associated with being tenants of the most powerful nobleman in the County Palatine of Durham. It does not appear that the Earl of Westmorland's regime was something which they wanted to be free from, in exchange for a more modern style of estate management.

How significant was the history of Brancepeth in shaping the seventeenth-century parishioners' consciousness about the way things should be done? The tenants of Brancepeth clearly had an oral tradition of history, recounting the great times of the past in their own community, and regretting the loss of that world. This outlook on life would have influenced attitudes about how social relationships should be conducted, and what values and customs should be preserved. As a backward-looking community, it could be expected that social attitudes in Brancepeth, particularly in the early seventeenth century, may have been more akin to a medieval than an early modern society.

The clashes between the Sandersons and the chief tenants can be more easily explained if the tenants' expectations of Lordship are seen as very traditional. The chief complaints made against Sanderson seem quite trivial in the context of seventeenth-century enjoyment of positions of office. Sanderson allowed timber to be cut down to make new lofts for his house at West Brandon, and fencing to fence off part of the common land there for his own use. He had wooden vessels made for him from ash trees cut down from the land of three different tenants, and had other trees cut down for his own use.[46]

Sanderson sub-let the gallery in the castle to Ralph Fetherstonehalgh, who converted this stately room into a kitchen and coal

[46] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

house, removing the wainscot ceiling and letting the floorboards go rotten. Sanderson also sold lead gutters and other metalwork and glass from the castle, including the stained glass in the gallery which depicted the life of Christ.[47] The complainants were concerned that the rain was getting in, and that the castle was decaying, without regular fires burned to keep it dry and aired. Another complaint was that Sanderson was inviting his friends for private shooting parties 'for desport and recreation', reducing the store of birds in the park, including pheasants, heron, bittern, partridges, mallard and moor fowl, while at the same time 'restraining the neighbouring gentlemen, of good quality, and yeomen of the better sort that were cucking, hunting and fowling'.[48] Similarly, he was accused of inviting eighty or a hundred people to hunt deer with him, 'with great store of grey hounds forcing the deer oftentimes with a multitude of people, and coursing of the dogs, and often times by that hunting divers deer are casually killed not warrantably'.[49] The complainants also blamed the reduction of deer on Sanderson's policy of allowing so many people to shoot game in the parks, 'by which shooting the deer are not only much disquieted and disturbed in their feeding by the crack and report of the pistols, but are often killed'.[50] On one occasion, Richard Dighton, the keeper of the West Park, attempted to stop Sanderson shooting too many deer, but this apparently resulted in him being pulled off his horse, beaten and dragged to the castle, where he was imprisoned by Sanderson and his servants and friends.[51]

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[47] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

[48] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

[49] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

[50] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

[51] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

These complaints were made by seventeen of the tenants, local men, who were no doubt concerned that the castle and lordship would no longer be fit for a lord who would continue the lifestyle of the Earls.[52] They were not complaining about the increased rents, or many things which directly affect their well-being. The issues raised revolve around the loss of good lordship, the running down of the castle and the game parks, and the loss of community pride and prestige which, for the neighbouring gentlemen and better sort of yeoman, went with hunting with the Earl of Westmorland, and being granted special status as his tenants in Durham and elsewhere.

Even as late as 1614, the tenants of Brancepeth were harping back to the good old days of the Earls of Westmorland, and unrealistically hoping for that world to return. In the meantime, they witnessed the day to day depressing reality of the decaying castle, the piecemeal destruction of their woodland, and the despoiling of their game parks.

The granting of the lordship, with the other Neville lordship of Raby, and also Barnard Castle to the king's favourite Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, in 1613, may have initially offered hope to the tenants, particularly when Somerset was also given the position of Lord Lieutenant of Durham. The new Lord of Brancepeth kept on friendly terms with recusants such as Sir John Claxton of Waterhouse, much to the irritation of Sanderson, who by 1615 was pressing for further suppression of recusants.[53] It would be difficult to predict whether Brancepeth would have settled down to the old regime again, had Somerset retained the lordship for longer than three years. The Earl of Somerset appointed his own

[52] DCRO, D/Gr/354.

[53] CSP(D), 1611-1618, p. 329.

officers, including his steward Thomas Emerson, whose authority threatened the power of Sanderson. However, even though Emerson and Sanderson clashed, Sanderson managed to stay put as Constable of the Castle.

Henry Sanderson attempted to blame the servants of Thomas Emerson for allowing the hunting of deer and despoiling the woods, under the direction of Sir John Claxton. According to Samuel Sanderson, when the Bishop intervened in 1615 to declare that there was to be no further despoiling of the woods, the tenants of Brancepeth celebrated in traditional fashion by ringing the church bells, drumming, making bonfires, shouting 'God save the King and the Prince', and apparently some said it was 'as great a deliverance as when the Children of Israel went out of Egypt'.[54] But although Sanderson's criticisms of Emerson in 1615 were damning, when the lordships were taken from Somerset, and given to the Prince of Wales in 1616, Emerson was kept on as royal steward, while Sanderson remained as constable of the castle.

This arrangement left Brancepeth with two figures of authority who had both been accused of exploiting the natural resources of Brancepeth for their own purposes, and who did not get along with each other. Although the tenants had lost the benefits of a powerful resident lord of the manor, they had not, by 1614, suffered greatly from increased rents. The Earl of Westmorland's tenants had been bound into a culture of low rents for hereditary leasehold tenancies, in return for military service and the loyalty of affinity and service given to the aristocratic Neville

[54] PRO, SP14/83, (31 Oct. 1615); See D. Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, (London, 1989), for these traditional ways of celebration.

household.[55] At first after the attainder of the Earl, stability and loyalty was needed more than revenues in the Crown lordships which were significant in the defence of the English border. By 1593, when a review of available horsemen was made, it was getting difficult to provide the traditional numbers of horsemen to muster for the Bishop, because so many large households in Durham were destroyed or weakened.[56]

The 1607 a survey had been drawn up to help the Crown to establish the true value of the tenancies, with a view to increasing the rents.[57] By the time the lordships of Brancepeth, Raby and Barnard Castle reverted to the Prince of Wales in 1616, the Crown's need for extra money took priority over concerns about border service. Thomas Emerson set about increasing the revenues from individual tenancies in all three lordships, by converting some of the increase into a fine, payable in three half-yearly instalments.[58] This was not an easy time to collect increased rents and fines. The harvests of 1622 and 1623 were very poor in the north of England, and in the north-west this resulted in famine in some of the Lake District parishes. In the north-east, although there is no evidence of famine, some parish registers show an increase in burials for these years, suggesting that starvation or famine-related disease may have affected people living or travelling through the north-east.[59]

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[55] See CPR 1575-1578 p. 376; J. F. Larkin and P. L. Hughes (eds.), Stuart Proclamations, (Oxford, 1973) pp. 488-9, Proclamation Against Tenant-Rights, 1620 and footnotes; CSP(D) 1639 p. 100.

[56] PRO, SP/15/32, (29 Aug. 1593), Presentment about horsemen, published in D. S. Reid, (ed.), A Durham Presentment of 1593, (Durham, 1979).

[57] PRO, LR/2/192, Survey of Brancepeth 1607.

[58] Reid, Crown Lordships, p. 46.

[59] A. Appleby, Famine in Tudor and Stuart England, California: Stanford University Press, 1978, p. 127.

Before he had successfully collected all the fines, Thomas Emerson died. After his death, an assessment was made of the success of his attempts to increase the income from the lordships. The arrears from the three Crown lordships amounted to over £5,000 by 1624.[60] Later that year Sir Henry Vane took over as steward, and drew up new easier terms for bringing the rents closer in line with similar tenancies held in other manors. However, before all the rents had been increased under the new arrangements, the lordship was sold to the City of London. By 1628 the higher rents in the Brancepeth Lordship had increased the yearly value of the Lordship by twenty-four per cent.[61] However, the 1629 survey shows that only some of the rents had been increased, when the leases had been renewed.[62]

By the time the Cole family took over the castle and lordship in the 1630s was it likely that there was anything left of the Neville legacy on the social organisation of Brancepeth? How many people were likely to share the heritage of memories recounted in the 1614 enquiry? This largely depends on the turnover of the population in Brancepeth, since the days of the Nevilles. In two Nottinghamshire communities with detailed household listings, Peter Laslett found that about fifty-two per cent of the population of Cogenhoe changed between 1618 and 1628, and sixty-one per cent of the population of Clayworth were replaced between 1676 and 1688.[63] Lyn Boothman has used Easter Offerings books of Long Melford, Suffolk to assess population turnover. Between 1676 and 1684, she found

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[60] Reid, Crown Lordships, p. 47.

[61] CLRO, RCE Rentals 166, Royal Warrant, 1628.

[62] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

[63] P. Laslett, 'Clayworth and Cogenhoe', in H. E. Bell and R. L. Ollard, (eds.), Historical Essays, (London, 1963), pp. 174, 177.

that half of the people who paid the offering remained in the parish.[64] Population turnover shows up most clearly when census type listings are available for comparison, where the actual turnover of individuals can more easily be observed. Unfortunately no similar sources are available to assess population turnover in Brancepeth.

Some of the family names of the old Neville retainers and their relatives persisted in Brancepeth well into the seventeenth century, for example the Claxtons, the Fetherstonehalghs and Chomleys.[65] Although the higher status families can sometimes be traced through pedigrees and wills, it is more difficult to discover what happened to the poorer families. Because the parish registers of Brancepeth do not start until 1599, it is not possible to trace the non-gentry families using the Family Reconstitution. However, the persistence of surnames in other records can give some indication of population movement.

The survey of the tenants of the Brancepeth Lordship which was drawn up in 1570 can be used to compare the family surnames against the surnames on the 1629 survey as an indication of the extent of continuity from the times of the Nevilles.[66] The 1570 survey was drawn up by William Humberstone and Richard Ashton, to assist the crown in assessing the value and extent of the lands of the recently attained Earl of Westmorland. As such it contains details of the tenants in different parts of the Brancepeth Lordship. The 1629 survey was drawn up for a similar

[64] L. Boothman, 'Mobility and Stability in Long Melford, Suffolk in the late Seventeenth Century', Local Population Studies, No. 62, 1999.

[65] See will of Henry Neville, 1563 for names of retainers and relatives, in Greenwell, (ed.), Wills, Part 2, pp. 1-6.

[66] PRO, E164/37; CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

purpose, and also identifies the tenants by name in different parts of the Lordship.

The survey of 1570 shows one hundred and nineteen distinctly different surnames. The survey of 1629 shows eighty-four distinctly different surnames. Almost fifty per cent of the surnames shown on the 1570 survey were also present on the 1629 survey. Looking at these figures from the base line of 1629, of the surnames shown on the 1629 survey, approximately two thirds of the surnames were present on the 1570 survey, normally in the same part of the parish on both surveys. This suggests a high level of family stability in a community over a period of nearly sixty years. In Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire, Howell found that seventy-five per cent of surnames survived in the manorial records over a forty-year period from 1637-86, although only sixty-nine per cent had remained from 1593-1636.[67] However, in Honiger in Sussex, only two out of the sixty-three surnames found in the parish register between 1600 and 1634 was found in the parish register between 1700 and 1724.[68] The proportions of surnames which persist should be assessed based on the type of sources used, and the length of time over which the comparisons are made.

Manorial surveys are perhaps not the best source for judging population turnover, because they record those with more secure tenancies, rather than more transient undertenants, and servants. Differences in recording policies may partly explain why there are fewer different surnames on the 1629 survey than on the 1570 survey. However, despite the limitations in the evidence, the continuance of family

[67] C. Howell, Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition, (Cambridge, 1983), p. 248-9.

[68] K. Wrightson, English Society, (London, 1982,) p. 42.

surnames in Brancepeth suggests that at least the more secure tenants remained a fairly stable element in the local community.

The very poorest of tenants, the tenants at will in 1570 who were more or less servants of the castle and poor retainers, may have been forced by economic necessity to move on. However, some of the names missing from the 1629 survey are not unfamiliar in the parish registers of Brancepeth in the later part of the seventeenth century, suggesting some families with those surnames continued to exist in the parish, perhaps as sub-tenants not shown by name on the 1629 survey. Other families appear to have died out or moved on, making way for some new tenants.

Most of the tenants of Brancepeth in the early seventeenth century therefore appear to have had family roots in the parish which extended back to the times of the Earls of Westmorland. These people were not ignorant of their community's history, and their complaints against Sanderson suggest that they greatly regretted the decline of good lordship and the community lifestyle which went with being tenants of a powerful noble. These attitudes are likely to have affected the kinds of social values which they brought to their social relationships amongst each other.

2.4 Religious beliefs in Brancepeth

An assessment of the religious culture of Brancepeth will be made in this section, by considering the evidence for the survival of Catholicism, the development of Jesuit-style recusancy, the existence of Puritans and nonconformists, and the churchmanship of Brancepeth's best-documented rector. The existence of particular types of religious adherents could form the basis of significant social groups within the parish.

Closely intertwined with the Neville heritage of 'good lordship', was the cultural background of Roman Catholic religious beliefs. Although there were clearly many more things which upset the northern Earls than the Protestantism of Queen Elizabeth, it was religion which formed the rallying point of opposition in the 1569 rebellion.[69] The opposition to Protestantism seems to have captured popular feeling far below the ranks of the nobility, gentry and clergy, and clearly extended down to the level of churchwardens in parish churches. At the time of the rebellion, in a number of Durham parishes, altars were mysteriously 'found' again, and mass was attended in the Cathedral by clergy and laity.[70] As tenants of the Earl of Westmorland, Brancepeth people were involved in the rebellion.[71]

After the failure of the Northern Rebellion and the attainder and removal of the Earl of Westmorland, grass-roots Catholic recusancy continued in the parish. The Claxton family, formerly Neville retainers, moved to the Waterhouse, situated in a very secluded area of the Deerness valley, where they not only represented survivalist Catholicism, but also encouraged the new counter-reformation mission of the Jesuits.[72] The famous priest John Boste was captured saying mass at the Waterhouse in 1593. He was publicly executed in Durham.[73] Margaret

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[69] Marcombe, 'Rude and Heady People'.

[70] Depositions published in C. Sharp, (ed.) Memorials of the Rebellion, originally published 1840, (Durham, 1975 edition), p. 252-260.

[71] Letter from Sir George Bowes to Earl of Sussex, 7 Nov. 1569, published in Sharp, (ed.), Memorials, p.10.

[72] See C. Haig, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', Past and Present, No. 93, 1981, p. 37 for a review of the arguments about survivalism and the creation of the Post-Reformation Catholic community.

[73] G. Anstruther, The Seminary Priests, Vol. 1, (Durham, 1968), p. 44.

Neville, one of the daughters of the Earl of Westmorland, was evidently present at Waterhouse when Boste was captured, and in her defence stated that through poverty after the death of her mother, she had needed to depend upon the hospitality of papists.[74]

Although it was very difficult for people below gentry status to afford recusancy fines, when lists of recusants were drawn up, other Brancepeth families were regularly included. In 1607 fifteen recusants were named; ten were from families below the level of gentry; the others listed were the Claxtons of Waterhouse and Holywell, and Mr Charles Hedworth and his wife at East Brandon.[75] In 1615 twelve people from Brancepeth were among the recusants presented to the Quarter Sessions for fines. Some of the surnames are the same as on the 1607 list; the Claxtons of Waterhouse, the wife of Nicholas Briggs of Hareholme, a Richardson and a Harrison of Tudhoe.[76] In 1624 ten people from Brancepeth were fined for recusancy, including Charles Hedworth and his wife from East Brandon, Alice Ladley of Willington (also on the 1607 list), a Harrison and a Richardson from Tudhoe, Isabel Briggs from Hareholme (on both the 1607 and 1615 lists), Mary Watson from Stockley, and a Trewhett from Tudhoe (both were also on the 1607 list).[77] In 1628 among the people who were presented to the Quarter Sessions for recusancy, sixteen people were from Brandon, and eleven from Tudhoe.[78] In 1629 four people from Brancepeth were warned to appear at York to compound

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[74] Letter of Margaret Neville to Queen Elizabeth, 1594, Sharp, Memorials, p. 313; J. M. Tweedy, Popish Elvet, (Durham, 1981), p. 13.

[75] DCRO, Q/S/1/3, published in C. M. Fraser and K. Emsley, (eds.), Durham Quarter Sessions Rolls, Surtees Society, Vol. 199, (1991), p. 332.

[76] DCRO, D/Gr/356, List of recusants 1615.

[77] PRO, DURH/3/206 Item 4, List of recusants 1624.

[78] DDCL, Sharp MSS Vol. 110, Lists of recusants 1628, 1689, fols. 5, 9.

for their estates as penalty for their recusancy, including Charles Hedworth of East Brandon.[79] The Recusancy Roll of 1637 shows that the Claxtons of Waterhouse compounded for Waterhouse, and were charged £12 per year as payment. The 1637 list also shows some familiar names; Trewhett and Coleman of Tudhoe.[80]

The Protestation Returns for Brancepeth show twenty-one men over the age of eighteen who, in 1642, refused to take the Protestation in favour of the Church of England, the Crown, and against Catholicism. They are described on the Brancepeth roll as 'those who refused to take the said protestation being Recusants within the said parish'. Again the surnames Claxton and Briggs were present, and also surnames such as Taylor and Sidgewick which had appeared on the 1637 list.[81] Brancepeth returned more papists than most parishes in the County of Durham; only Lanchester, amongst the rural parishes, returned substantially more names.[82]

There would appear, therefore, to have been a continuous group of known recusants in the parish, including the Claxton family who had been important retainers of the Earls of Westmorland. Whilst some recusants moved away, conformed or died, others held the faith for many years, and were regularly convicted and fined. Some names appear less frequently, such as the Pinkneys of Brandon, whose name appears in 1629 and 1637. However, this family were far from casual recusants; Miles Pinkney of Brandon went abroad to Douai to train as a priest in 1618, and had a

[79] DULASC, CC 221308, List of recusants 1629.

[80] A. M. Forster, (ed.), 'Durham's entries on the recusants' roll, 1636-7', in A. M. Forster, (ed.), Miscellanea Vol. III, Surtees Society, Vol. 175, (1965), pp. 165-8.

[81] H. M. Wood, (ed.), Durham Protestations, Surtees Society, Vol. 135, (1922), pp. 76-78.

[82] Tweedy, Popish Elvet, pp. 34-5.

distinguished career, founding a monastery in Paris, and writing and translating a number of books.[83] The named recusants who appear on these lists, living in most of the townships of the parish, are probably the tip of the iceberg of recusant sympathy in Brancepeth. Many poorer recusants may have outwardly conformed to escape conviction and heavy fines. Others moved between conformity and recusancy. Nicholas Catherick was listed as a churchwarden in 1629, but by 1635 he was reported to the church authorities as a recusant, and in 1642 he was among the recusants who refused the Protestation.[84]

Henry Sanderson was convinced of the recusant threat around him, and in a letter to the Bishop of Durham in 1603 he exhibited something like paranoia that local recusants were going to murder him.[85] Sanderson was no doubt partly so unpopular in Brancepeth because of his attitude and activities towards recusants. Sanderson worked with renegade priests to search out recusants in the 1590s.[86] One of his 'successes' was catching a priest called Thomas Palaser in the house of John Norton in Lamesley, near Gateshead, while John Norton shot at him with a fowling piece. John Norton, the priest and John Talbot, a Yorkshire yeoman who was present, possibly as the priest's guide, were all executed in Durham in August 1600.[87] Lamesley was close enough to Brancepeth for the

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[83] D. Bellenger, 'Miles Pinkney (1599-1674): A Durham Priest in Counter Reformation Paris', Northern Catholic History, No. 19, (1984); DNB Vol. 9 pp. 177-8 entry for Myles Pinkney alias Thomas Carre.

[84] DCRO, Ep/Br/1, Parish Register of Brancepeth; DULASC, SJB/5, Archdeacon's Visitation Book 1634-7; Wood, (ed.) Durham Protestations, pp. 76-78.

[85] PRO, SP/14/4, (3 Oct. 1603), Letter from Sanderson to the Bishop of Durham.

[86] J. A. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Elizabethan Durham', Recusant History, Vol. 14 No. 1, (1977), p. 5.

[87] Anstruther, Seminary Priests, Vol.1, p.268; Historical Manuscripts Commission, Salisbury Vol. 10, pp. 204-5.

recusants of Brancepeth to feel very wary and resentful of Sanderson's presence. Sanderson, from his home at West Brandon, had good reason to be suspicious of his neighbours, the Claxtons. The Waterhouse was just over the brow of the hill from West Brandon, and though Sanderson would not have been able to observe the comings and goings to and from the Waterhouse from his front door, he was likely to meet some of the people who belonged to the social networks of the Claxton family on their way back or forward, on the nearby tracks and roads. The flouting of the recusancy laws by the Claxtons, almost under his nose, made Sanderson focus his local hatred of recusants on Claxton and his associates. In his letter to the Bishop of Durham in 1603 Sanderson asked for the imprisonment of the recusant ringleaders in the county.[88] The castle at Brancepeth was subsequently used to lock up recusants, adding to the mistrust and dislike between Sanderson and, apparently, most of the residents of Brancepeth.[89]

Sanderson's breed of Protestantism was unlikely to convert many of the residents of Brancepeth. In the early seventeenth century, there is no evidence that any of the households of old Brancepeth families adopted a particularly Puritan stance.[90] When John Cosin, a staunch promoter of Arminian theology, went to live there in 1628 he seems to have had no Puritan opposition from his congregation in Brancepeth, in contrast to the opposition his policies raised from Puritan fellow-prebend, Peter Smart, in the Cathedral at Durham.[91]

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[88] PRO, SP/14/4, (3 Oct. 1603).

[89] Reid, Crown Lordships p. 25.

[90] Scout House belonged to the protestant Lever Family, but in the early seventeenth century, the family appeared to live in St Oswald's parish, see A. G. Matthews, Calumny Revised, (Oxford, 1934).

[91] DDCL, I/VII/87, Peter Smart's Sermon, printed 1629. The controversy between Peter Smart and John Cosin was over Cosin's introduction of the symbols and ceremonies of Arminian-style worship in Durham Cathedral. This provoked a highly critical sermon,

John Cosin was brought to Durham by Bishop Neile in 1624, to be rector of Elwick near Hartlepool, and a prebend of the Cathedral. In 1626 he was appointed to the living of Brancepeth, worth £160 per year, one of the best livings in the Diocese of Durham.[92] Unlike Bishop Neile who was, according to Peter Smart, of poor intellect,[93] John Cosin was a highly intelligent academic. Whilst at Cambridge, he had become convinced of the need for a new theological base for the Church of England; a doctrine which rejected the predestination of Calvinism, and which placed great emphasis on the sacrament as the means to salvation.

When Cosin took up residence in Brancepeth, after his clash with Peter Smart in 1628, his new style of worship seems to have provoked no opposition, although Cosin had conflict with his parishioners over the more mundane matters of contributions to church repairs and tithe payments.[94] The only signs of dissent in the years before the Civil War appear to be in the church court visitation books, which provide details of two parishioners who expressed some personal opinions about religion in Cosin's time as rector. George Wilkinson senior of Stockley was fined 2s 'for speaking disorderly words against the minister and saying further he cared not for any priest in England',[95] and William Batmanson, who was in

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preached in the Cathedral in 1628 by Peter Smart, and resulted in Smart being deprived of his living and eventually imprisoned. The dispute rumbled on and Smart brought complaints against Cosin in the months leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War. W. Longstaff, (ed.), The Acts of the High Commission, Surtees Society, Vol. 34, (1858), p. 211.

[92] DDCL, Hunter MSS 11 Item 19, Valuations of ecclesiastical livings 1634. It was also valued at £160 in 1636 for taxation for Ship Money, DDCL, Hunter MSS 22 item 17, Ship money 1636.

[93] Longstaff, (ed.), High Commission, p. 202.

[94] DULASC, Durham Consistory Court Depositions V/12 fols. 56, 73, 100-101, 127.

[95] DULASC, SJB/5.

trouble in 1638 for 'standing excommunicate and saying that God will heare his prayers aswell in the fields as in the church.'[96] These two individuals do not sound like Puritans; the Batmansons of nearby Broom in the parish of St Oswald, were known for recusancy, and it is likely that the Batmansons of Brancepeth were related to this family.[97]

Amongst Cosin's surviving sermons are some that were preached at Brancepeth. These sermons show, amongst other things, Cosin's concern to improve the church attendance and Sunday observance of his parishioners.[98] In contrast to the vocalised theological opposition which Cosin received from Peter Smart at Durham Cathedral, in Brancepeth Cosin appears to have faced only indifference about church attendance, recusancy, and an unwillingness to raise money for church repairs.

Although Cosin's services at Brancepeth may have had some outward similarities to the Catholic mass, at a time when Arminian clergy were generally misunderstood to be taking the country back to Rome under the cover of Anglicanism, Cosin was nevertheless very much against popery.[99] After Cosin was made Master of Peterhouse in Cambridge in 1635, he seems to have spent very little time in the parish, leaving the parishioners with William Milburn as curate, also an intelligent, educated man who was a keen student of the newly developing discipline

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[96] DULASC, SJB/7, Archdeacon's visitation book 1637.

[97] DCRO, Ep/Du.So 117, Parish Register of St. Oswald, Durham.

[98] J. Sanson, (ed.), John Cosin, The Works, Vol. 1, (Oxford, 1843).

[99] Ornsby, (ed.) Correspondence, Vol. 1, pp. 141, 144-5, 162; M. Tillbrooke, 'Arminianism and Society in County Durham, 1617-1642' in Marcombe (ed.) Last Principality; P. Lake, 'Anti-popery: the structure of a prejudice,' in R. Cust and A. Hughes, (eds.), Conflict in Early Stuart England, (London, 1989), p. 90. In the 1650s Cosin was deeply saddened to see his only son become a papist; Ornsby, (ed.), Correspondence, Vol. 1, pp. 233, 285.

of mathematics.[100] Both Cosin and Milburn were assisted at Brancepeth by a local untrained curate, old Nicholas Cockey who was described as an octogenarius when he died in 1644.[101]

However hard Cosin and his curates tried to get all their congregation to attend worship and to participate in Anglican sacraments, in 1637 a number of parishioners were still being listed as recusants, and by 1642, there were twenty-one adult males who were prepared to stand out against the Protestation. Even after the events of the Civil War, Commonwealth and Restoration, the traditions of recusancy continued in Brancepeth. In 1669 Dean Granville wrote out to parishes asking them to

> 'make dilligent search and inquirye about all conventicles and unlawful meetings within your parish how often they are held what are the numbers that usually meet at them, what condition or sort of people they consist of and from whom or upon what hopes they look for impunity'[102].

Whilst most parishes replied by answering the questions about non-conformists and conventicles, Brancepeth sent a reply listing the names of sixty-three 'papists' as well as ten Quakers, seven Anabaptists, and two puritans, including Mr Robert Lever, a 'puritanicall Minister'.[103] Amongst the 'papists' were the surnames Briggs, Sidgewick, and

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[100] F. Wilmoth, 'Jonas Moore: practical mathematician and patron of science', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, (1990), p. 18-22.

[101] DCRO, Ep/Br/2, Parish Register of Brancepeth. An 'octogenarius' is a person aged over eighty.

[102] DULASC, Dean and Chapter Post Dissolution Muniments Item 29 Box 30, Non-conformist meeting certificates and reports.

[103] DULASC, Dean and Chapter Post Dissolution Muniments Item 29 Box 30.

Richardson, which had appeared in the recusancy lists earlier in the century. Clearly, recusancy was still prevalent in Brancepeth in the 1660s; what is interesting about this evidence is that the names of 'papists' were voluntarily supplied to the Dean by the curate, Gabriel Threkeld and Cuthbert Douthwaite, the churchwarden. Douthwaite could have been expected to have shielded local recusants, as a descendent of an old Brancepeth family. Perhaps, by the 1660s recusants were becoming more of a marginalised group in Brancepeth society. Petronilla Taylor, a spinster widow living at the Waterhouse in 1678, in her will requested to be buried in the 'chappell at Waterhouse called St. Iraganatous Chappell'.[104] It would appear that the Jesuit mission in Brancepeth had been sufficiently successful to establish a separate burial ground for recusants such as Petronilla, who was among the sixty-three papists reported in 1669.[105] In comparison, the 'puritanical minister' Robert Lever, was listed because he occupied the family home of Scout House, but does not appear to have gathered a non-conformist group about him in Brancepeth. Archdeacon Grenville in his report to the Bishop of Durham, following the letters from parishes in 1669, reported Quaker meetings in Lanchester and in the City of Durham, and some kind of private meeting in Witton-le-Wear. However, he included Brancepeth amongst the parishes in which he was satisfied 'that there are no conventi kept within there curacies'.[106] The small numbers of Puritans, Quakers and Anabaptists were members of groups which met in other parishes.

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[104] DULASC, Will of Petronilla Taylor, 1678.

[105] The founder of the Jesuits was called Ignatius; A. Jones, Dictionary of Saints, (Ware, 1994), p. 141. See J. Bossy, The English Catholic Community 1570-1850, (London, 1975), for the significance of separate burial grounds.

[106] DULASC, Dean and Chapter Post Dissolution Muniments Item 29 Box 30.

In the later seventeenth century Brancepeth remained known for its recusancy. When orders were issued by the Sheriff in October 1689 to search the houses of all 'papists or reputed papists' for stocks of arms, weapons, gunpowder or ammunition above the value of £5, the homes of sixteen people from Brandon, eleven people from Tudhoe, and six people from elsewhere in the parish were searched. No weapons were brought in from Brancepeth, and the haul of weapons from the whole of the county was only four swords, three muskets, two pistols, one rapier, a pitchfork and seven scythes; nothing to cause the authorities to believe that recusants in County Durham were arming up to oppose the new Protestant regime of William and Mary. Not all areas of County Durham appear to have been searched; just areas which might, in the eyes of the authorities, be places where recusants may have been mustering. Brandon, and nearby Hedley and Esh, both in Lanchester parish, Tudhoe and Elvet in Durham City, and also Piercebridge in the south of the county, were the only places where a good number of houses were searched. They were evidently perceived to be communities containing substantial numbers of politically dangerous recusants.[107]

The Catholic legacy of recusancy was certainly long-lasting in Brancepeth. There is no evidence of a substantial number of Puritan 'godly' people forming an influential group within the parish, like the group which Wrightson and Levine detected in their study of Terling.[108] Instead, in Brancepeth there were a lot of Catholics, who clung to the old religion even though it impoverished them and occasionally caused their imprisonment. In comparison to the Puritan group in Terling, these people had no institutional power.

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[107] DDCL, Sharp MSS Vol. 110, fols. 19-89.

[108] K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village, (Oxford, 1995 edition), pp. 165-171.

The evidence considered in this section suggests that in Brancepeth, there was a continuance of the 'old religion' at least from the days of the Earls of Westmorland, through to the new-style recusancy of the Jesuit mission, which was also active in Brancepeth. The extent to which the noted recusants were included in the social networks of Brancepeth, will provide one indicator of the extent to which Catholics were forming a separate social group within Brancepeth over the course of the seventeenth century.

2.5 The population history of Brancepeth in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

There are few qualitative sources which give clues about what happened to the population of Brancepeth after the arrival of the Cole family in the 1630s. No later surveys survive for the seventeenth century population. Therefore it is necessary to use other kinds of sources and methods to try to reconstruct the changes which the parish underwent during the course of the seventeenth century.

The population history of the parish is very relevant to an understanding of the social networks which existed in a parish. Larger populations could be expected to contain subgroups. Smaller populations could be expected to maintain more links with families who lived outside the parish. Although our initial 'tour' of the parish suggested the number of houses which existed throughout the parish, it is necessary to trace the population history of the parish in greater detail, over the course of the century. The two types of sources which are useful for this purpose are the one off 'snapshot' provided by listings of households at particular

dates, and the parish registers which show the increases and decreases of population brought about by births and deaths.

The ecclesiastical census of 1563 provides a useful starting point. Although the reliability of this religious census has been questioned,[109] the figure for Brancepeth seems fairly convincing, when compared to other sources. In 1563, according to the ecclesiastical census, the Rector of Brancepeth was responsible for the cure of souls in 218 households.[110] In the townships of the parish there are 212 tenants shown on the 1570 survey.[111]

The Hearth Tax Assessments of 1665 and 1666 can be used to show the number of households within the parish just over 100 years after the ecclesiastical census. Of the variety of Hearth Tax documentation which survives for County Durham, the assessments dated 1665, 1666 and 1674 look to be most useful.[112] However, only the 1665 assessment shows the householders names, both solvents (households liable to pay the tax) and non-solvents (households who were exempted from the Hearth Tax) in all the townships of Brancepeth. The 1666 Hearth Tax is damaged by a hole where some of the Tudhoe names should be, and the 1674 Hearth Tax appears to be incomplete. However, although the 1665

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[109] A. Dyer, 'The Bishops' Census of 1563:its significance and accuracy', Local Population Studies No. 49, 1992, p. 30; N. Goose, 'The Bishops' Census of 1563: A Re-Examination of its Reliability', Local Population Studies, No. 56, 1996.

[110] BL, Harley MSS 594 item 16, Bishop Pilkington's Returns to the Privy Council 1563, fol. 188v.

[111] PRO, E164/37.

[112] PRO, E179/245/27 Hearth Tax Assessment (Michaelmas 1665), E179/106/28 Hearth Tax Assessment (Lady Day 1666), E179/106/25 Hearth Tax Assessment (Lady Day 1674). See Arkell's comments on the different Hearth Tax assessments in T. Arkell, 'Printed Instructions for Administering the Hearth Tax', in K. Schurer and T. Arkell, (eds.), Surveying the People, (Oxford, 1992).

Heath Tax assessments are undamaged, the 1665 assessment is known to have under-recorded non-solvent households elsewhere in Durham.[113] By cross checking the number of households in each township of the parish on the 1665 assessment with the 1666 and 1674 assessments, it is possible to estimate that approximately forty-nine non-solvent families from three townships have been omitted from the 1665 assessment. These households were added to the number of households shown on the 1665 assessment, making a total of 342 households.

Between the ecclesiastical census of 1563 and the Hearth Tax assessments of 1665 and 1666, the number of households in Brancepeth increased from approximately 218 to 342. As Tom Arkle has argued, the household is a useful unit for measuring increases or decreases in population.[114] It is particularly so when attempting to relate the increase or decrease in population to the visual appearance of the parish. Some of these new households seem to have been accommodated on intakes from the commons, on land which had previously been wooded, and on park land which had been put to agricultural use.[115]

Other sources for the population of the parish in the 1630s and 1640s add extra information. The Brancepeth tithe book drawn up in 1630 shows 288 numbered individuals who appear to be householders within the parish, excluding the households of Tudhoe, which are not listed individually. This would suggest that the population of the parish was

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[113] D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The Making of an Industrial Society, (Oxford, 1991) pp. 153, 170-1.

[114] T. Arkell, 'Multiplying Factors for Estimating Population Totals From the Hearth Tax', Local Population Studies, No. 28, (1982), p. 56.

[115] New farm names in these kinds of locations appear within the parish registers in the mid and late seventeenth centuries. The manorial court roll of 1677 includes fines for encroachments, DCRO, D/Br/E11, Brancepeth Manor Court, 1676-7; DCRO, D/Br/L82, Legal evidence regarding tithes 1703.

considerably larger in the 1630s than it was in 1563. The Protestation Returns confirm this view. The Protestation Returns for Durham are a remarkably complete collection.[116] The Brancepeth lists can therefore provide an alternative source to estimate the population of the parish. The Protestation was to be taken by all males over the age of eighteen; the number taking the protestation in Brancepeth was 396. Obviously not all males over the age of eighteen were householders, so it is necessary to use appropriate multipliers to compare males over eighteen with household figures. Based on the multiplier of 3.25,[117] the population of Brancepeth could be estimated as nearly 1300 people in 1642, assuming the number of men aged eighteen or more made up a normal proportion of the population of Brancepeth.[118]

The use of multipliers to convert numbers of households into estimates of population is also a rather inexact procedure, as the size of households can vary considerably depending on the kind of location and the time period which is studied. Peter Laslett found that the average number of people per household between 1574 and 1821 was 4.75 in his study of 100 different communities.[119] However, the means varied from 3.63 (Little Strickland in Westmorland in 1787) to 7.22 (St Mildred Poultry in London, 1695). Peter Laslett warned that 4.75 should not be used as a universal multiplier.[120] Arkell argues for the use of a figure around 4.3 for

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[116] Wood, (ed.) Durham Protestations, p. xii.

[117] See L. Bradley, A Glossary for Local Population Studies, (Matlock, 1978), p. 65.

[118] Whiteman and Russell suggest a multiplier 'between 3 and 3.5 is probably appropriate' and that to give a more precise figure would be misleading., A. Whiteman and V. Russell, 'The Protestation Returns 1641-1642: Part II', Local Population Studies No. 56, (1996), p. 28.

[119] P. Laslett, 'Mean Household Size in England Since the Sixteenth Century', in P. Laslett, & R. Wall, (eds), Household and Family in Past Time, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 126.

[120] Laslett, 'Mean Household Size', p. 139.

rural and urban parishes outside London, but stresses that the average number of people per household varies in different places and over time.[121] The multiplier of 4.3 may be rather too low for rural seventeenth-century Brancepeth, when compared to Laslett's means from Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmorland in 1695 (5.16) and Clayworth, Nottinghamshire in 1676 (4.43).[122]

The Marriage Duty Act household listing for Tudhoe in 1695 could provide a useful check on the use of 4.3 as an appropriate multiplier in Brancepeth. The members of each household are clearly shown, including children and servants.[123] The 59 households list a population of 285 people, which works out at an average of 4.83 per household. Although the township of Tudhoe in 1695 may not be fully representative of the parish at different periods of the seventeenth century, on balance a multiplier of 4.75 may be appropriate for Brancepeth after all. Including an estimate of the number of households in Tudhoe, the tithe book of the 1630s could suggest a population of possibly about 1,600.[124] These figures are higher than the estimate of 1300 people derived from the Protestation Returns of 1642. A number of explanations may account for the difference; the proportion of men aged over 18 in the Protestation Returns may have been lower than thirty per cent of the population of the parish; the multiplier of 4.75 persons per household used with the tithe book may have been too high for the whole of the parish in 1630. The

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[121] T. Arkell, 'Multiplying Factors for Estimating Population Totals From the Hearth Tax', Local Population Studies, No. 28, (1982), p. 53.

[122] Laslett, 'Mean Household Size', p. 130-1.

[123] DCRO, D/Sa/E 962.

[124] The only reliable listing of households available for Tudhoe is the Marriage Duty Act listings of 1695. This therefore provides the basis for a rough estimate of the population in Tudhoe, though this clearly is likely to have varied between the 1630s and 1695.

tithe book may include a number of properties which were farmed by people who lived elsewhere in the parish. The population of the parish may have fallen between 1630 when the tithe book was drawn up and 1642 when the Protestation was taken. As parish population estimates based on the number of households and Protestation Returns can only be very approximate, it would be safe to say that Brancepeth parish had a population of about 1300 -1600 people in the middle part of the century. To find out more about the changes in population, and about the age structure of the population, we need to turn to the parish registers.

There are no bishop's transcripts of the sixteenth or seventeenth-century registers of Brancepeth. The original parish registers which survive in bound books do not commence until 1599.[125] Compared to many parish registers, the Brancepeth registers have been carefully kept. The Brancepeth parish registers do not suffer from the complete breakdown of recording for any period longer than 16 months, from January 1672 to April 1673. There are suggestions of under-recording in the year 1667 when no baptisms were recorded between May and September, no marriages for the whole year, and no burials between May and October. A period of eight months goes by from August 1680 to March 1681 when there are apparently no baptisms. This coincides with a period from May 1678 to March 1681 when there are apparently no burials. These periods all occur during the rectorship of Daniel Brevint.[126] Marriage numbers are also low in 1677, 1678 and 1680, though normal in 1679. There are no marriages recorded between 1685 and 1693.

[125] DCRO, Ep/Br 1-3, Brancepeth Parish Registers.

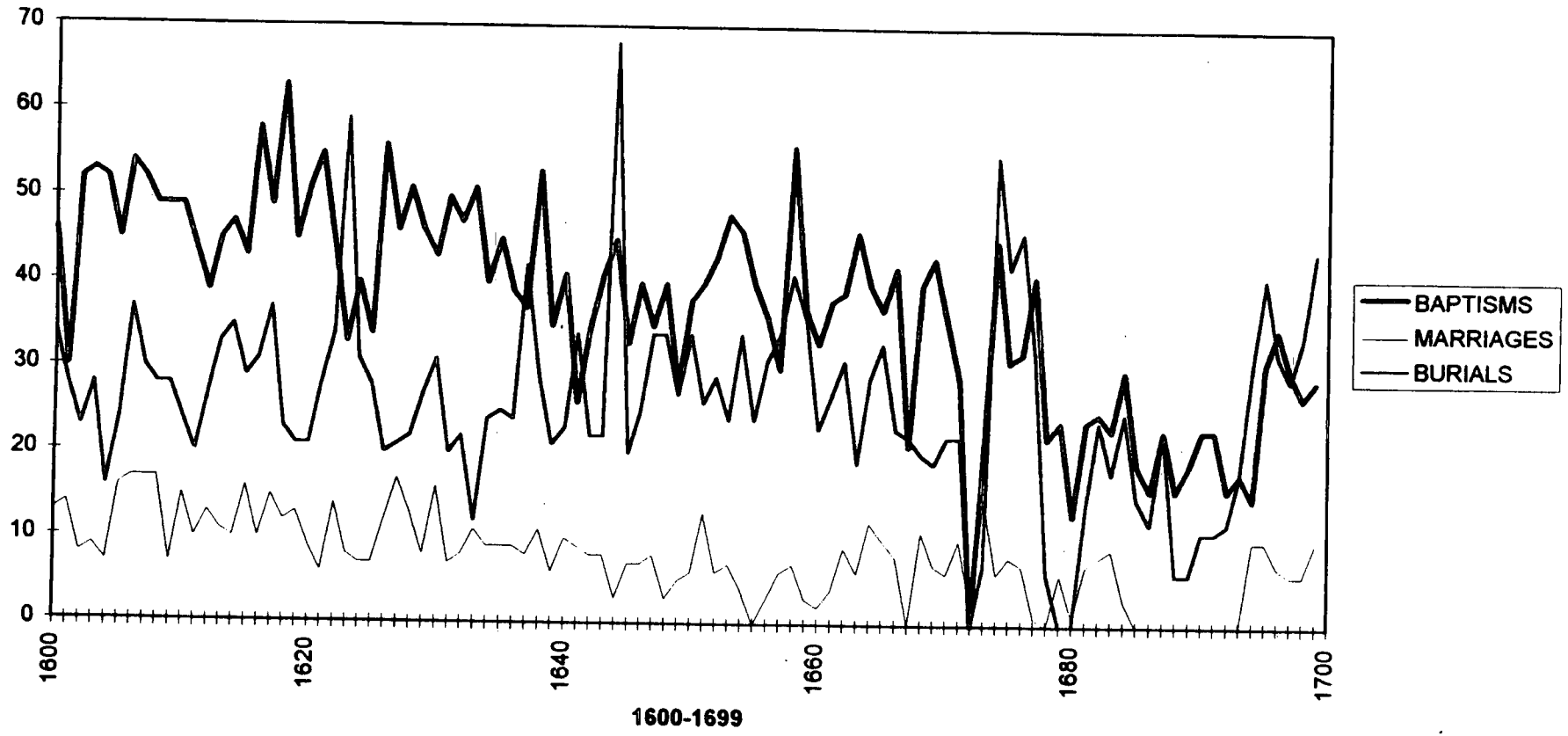
[126] Daniel Brevint was installed Dean of Lincoln Cathedral in January 1682. (Dictionary of National Biography). His move to Lincoln may account for the deficiencies in the register 1678-81; entries were normally written on loose sheets of paper then copied into the parish registers at a later date.

Although these periods of the register do strongly suggest that the person who kept the register did not always record all the baptisms, marriages and burials which took place in the church, the situation may not be as drastic as these figures first suggest. There is no reason to assume that baptisms, marriages and burials should be evenly distributed throughout the months of the year. Numbers of marriages are small per year in a parish with a population the size of Brancepeth. When six or eight marriages per year is normal, an absence of marriages for a single year could simply reflect the fact that no couples got married in the parish church that year. In the later seventeenth century, it became very fashionable to marry by licence in Durham City. A number of Brancepeth couples appear to have done this, judging from the Durham Marriage Bonds, particularly in the 1680s (Over forty people from Brancepeth were granted marriage licences in Durham in the 1680s).[127] Judging by the evidence in disputed marriages cases which came to the Durham Consistory Court, some marriages happened without the blessing of a Church wedding in seventeenth-century Durham. These things considered, the Brancepeth parish registers provide a valuable source of information on population trends. Although the data is not absolutely perfect, as parish registers go, Brancepeth has a very good seventeenth-century register.

Figure 2.4 shows the results of the counts of baptisms, marriages and burials listed in the parish register over the hundred year period. This clearly shows up peak years for burials. 1644 stands out in this respect; many Durham parishes show a sudden rise in burials in 1644, when diseases, including plague and typhus hit the north of England, and the presence of the Scottish and Royalist armies in the county depleted food

[127] DULASC Durham Marriage Bonds Index.

Figure 2.4 Brancepeth baptisms, marriages and burials, 1600-1699



supplies, leaving the population almost starving.[128] No single cause seems to account for the additional burials in Brancepeth. There was no significant Civil War action in the Brancepeth area to swell the burials, although some Brancepeth men may have lost their lives as a result of fighting for the Royalist cause at Marston Moor, or even further away. Quarter Sessions requests for relief of soldiers show at least one County Durham man travelled as far as Oxford in the Civil War.[129]

The other peaks in mortality occur in 1623 and 1674. These were times of food shortages in the north of England, though there is no direct evidence of famine conditions in the north-east.[130] Durham diarist Christopher Sanderson wrote in 1674 that 'if great quantity of rye and other grain had not come in at Newcastle and Stockton, undoubtedly we had had a great famine in Westmorland and Cumberland, Northumberland, Bishoprick, Northumberland, and ye North Rideing in Yorkshire'.[131] Shortages of food may have increased the number of poor travellers, both in 1623 and 1674, travelling in search of food, but failing to find food and shelter before becoming ill and dying. The register of Brancepeth offers no reasons for the increase in burials. However, the neighbouring parish of St. Oswald, Durham, which covered a large stretch of the Great North Road, shows four burials of poor people in 1623 whose

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[128] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, The Population History of England, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 680-81; Ralph Cole, of Brancepeth estate, castle and parks claimed to have lost £800 in corn, hay, sheep and horses to the Royalist and Scottish armies in 1643 and 1644; R. Welford, (ed.) Records of the Committees for Compounding, Surtees Society Publications, Vol. 111, (1905), p.165.

[129] DCRO, Q/S/OB4, Quarter Sessions Order Book 1660, fol. 73.

[130] A. Appleby, 'Disease or Famine? Mortality in Cumberland and Westmorland 1580-1640,' Economic History Review, Vol. 26, No. 3, (1973). See also P. Laslett, The World We Have Lost - further explored, (London, 1983), Chapter 6.

[131] J. C. Hodgeson, (ed.), Six North Country Diaries, Surtees Society, Vol. 118, (1910), p. 38.

names were not even known, around the same time as the number of burials in St Oswald's register increased by about fifty per cent when compared with 1622 and 1624 figures. In March 1623, Barbara Felton was buried with her husband, being described in St Oswald's register as 'powre people sekinge releiffe'.[132] The Brancepeth peaks in mortality which coincide with periods of local food shortages suggest that some of the weaker members of the population may have died from lack of food, or other illnesses related to food shortages, such as eating unwholesome food, because of lack of resources to buy the food which was available to the rest of the population who survived.

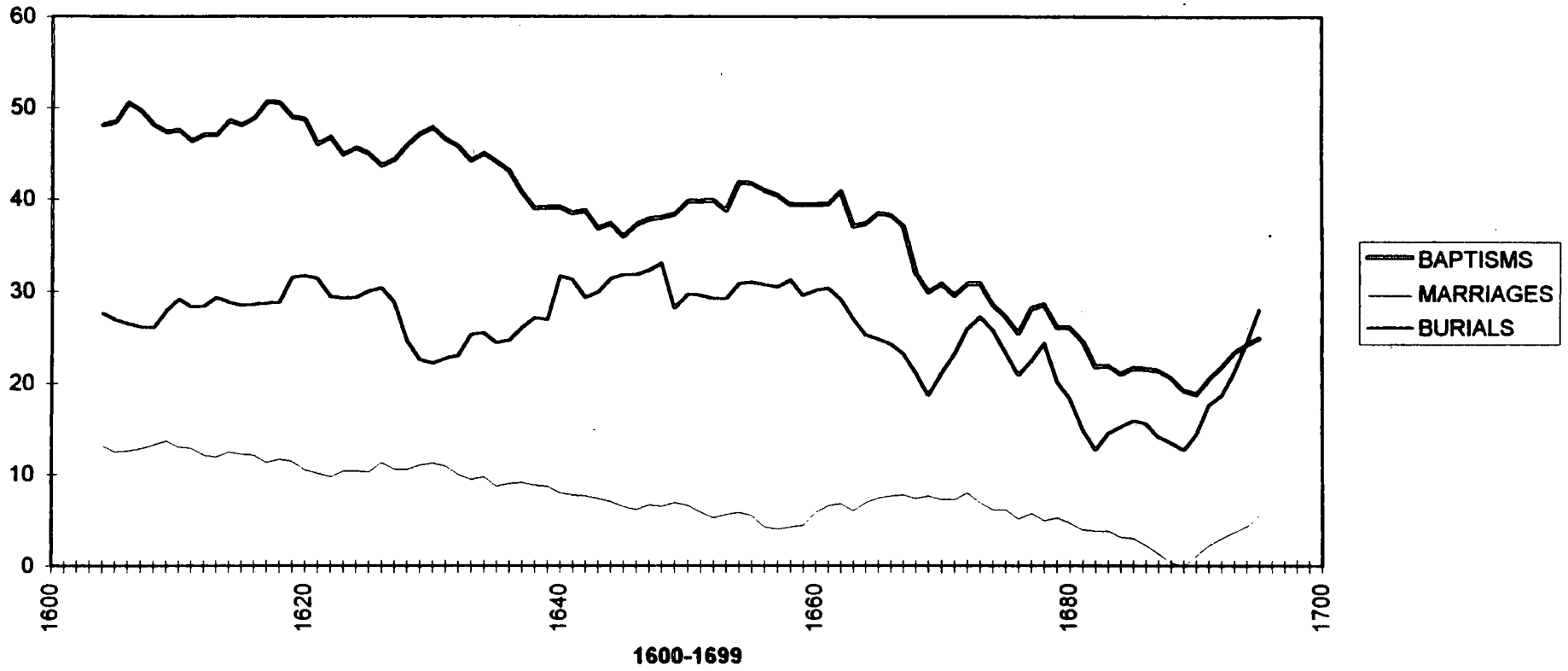
The counts of entries in the Brancepeth parish register appear to show a reduction in the number of baptisms towards the end of the century. However, the fluctuations year to year make it difficult to appreciate if there are any general trends, such as a fall in baptisms, or a rise in burials over the course of the century. Demographers often choose to use a nine-year moving average of the individual year figures, in order to smooth out the variations in figures from year to year, which can make the pattern of change easier to observe.[133]

Figure 2.5 shows the nine-year moving averages of the numbers of baptisms, marriages and burials in the Brancepeth register. The figure for baptisms, shown against 1620, for example, is derived from an average of the figures for the years 1616 to 1624. Figure 2.5 shows that the number of children baptised is clearly declining from the mid-century. Burials present a more complex pattern. Figures are higher in the early part of the century and in the mid-century, but also show a rise back to this level at

[132]A. W. Headlam, (ed.), The Parish Registers of St Oswald's Durham, (Durham, 1891), pp. 65-70.

[133] Bradley, Glossary, p. 49.

Figure 2.5 Brancepeth baptisms, marriages and burials, 1600-1699 (9 year moving average)



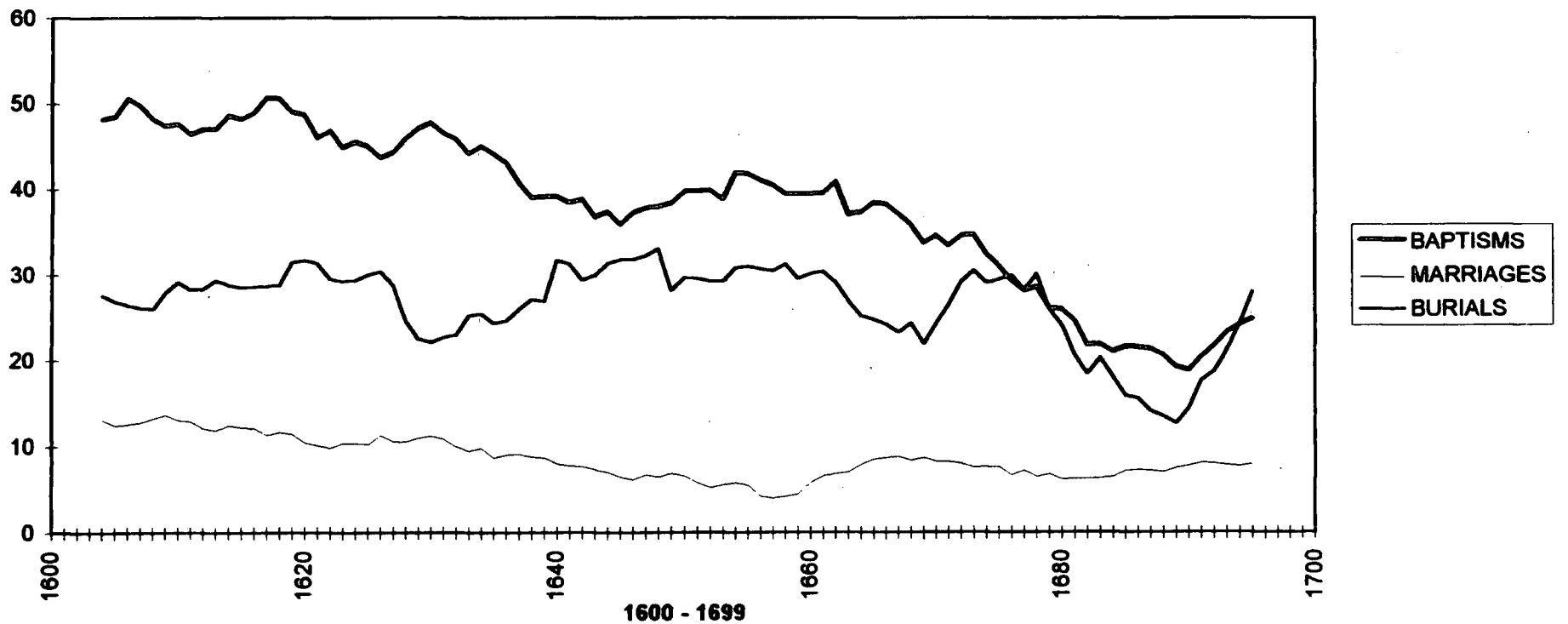
the end of the period. The peaks of burials shown in Figure 2.4, in 1623, 1644 and 1674 all raise the figures for those periods in the moving average shown in Figure 2.5. Likewise, the short gaps in recording pull down the averages in the latter part of the century.

In order to decide whether baptisms and burials were clearly declining at the end of the century, Figure 2.6 was produced. Based on the principles of interpolation, the sections of the register where no entries were recorded were given notional numbers of baptisms and burials, based on an average taken from four years of reliable records either side of the defective period. [134] Figure 2.6 still shows a decline in baptisms and burials from the 1670s to around 1690, followed by an increase in baptisms and burials in the 1690s.

The increase in baptisms, burials, and marriages in the 1690s suggests an improvement in the recording of these events in the parish register, and may be more reflective of the number of births, marriages and deaths in the parish than are the figures of the late 1670s and 1680s. We could accuse the rector of Brancepeth or his curate of failing to write everyone's names in the register book after he had baptised them, married them, or buried them in the 1670s and 1680s. However, apart from the odd years where there are no records, the fact that there are only short periods when baptisms, marriages or burials are not recorded would suggest that the person who was responsible for keeping the register was doing his job. Another explanation may be that the clergy in this period were less successful in getting all of their parishioners to come to church to conform to the rites of the Church of England. When John Tonge

[134] See Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, p. 705. Wrigley and Schofield normally used the records of events 60 months either side of the defective period to produce estimates for the defective period.

Figure 2.6 Brancepeth baptisms, marriages and burials, 1600-1699
(9 year moving average corrected for missing years and obvious under-recording)



became rector in 1695 he seems to have improved registration of vital events, partly by including papist births in the register.[135]

Brancepeth had falling numbers of baptisms in the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century, and the highest number of burials in the middle of the century. Wrigley and Schofield's English population totals show a decline in the population of England from 1651 until the 1680s and 1690s when the population begins to rise again.[136] Nationally, this is linked to a period in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the excess of births over deaths fell to their lowest levels since 1560, to the point where periodically there were fewer births than deaths. The end of the seventeenth century saw a return to a situation of natural increase, where the numbers of births exceeded deaths at pre-1650 levels.[137]

Brancepeth's population history fits in very well with national estimates. The natural increase (the difference between the number of baptisms and burials) reduces in the 1640s. The number of burials almost equals the number of baptisms in the middle of the century; by the later part of the seventeenth century the natural increase apparently drops to nil, recovering in the 1690s, ending the century with a slight decrease due to a small excess of numbers of burials over baptisms. It should, of course, be remembered that Wrigley and Schofield present estimates for births and deaths, which take into account other factors, such as under-registration and emigration. However, by comparing the Cambridge Group's estimates to the Brancepeth counts of baptisms, marriages and

[135] Fordyce, Durham, p. 428; DCRO, D/Sa/E959-61, Lists of births, burials and marriages in Tudhoe, 1695-6, 1699-c.1700.

[136] Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, p. 207.

[137] Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, p. 176-8.

burials, Brancepeth's experience can be placed in the wider context of the population history of other parishes in England.

One thing which stands out from this analysis of the Brancepeth parish registers in the seventeenth century, is that Brancepeth's birth rate was not fuelling a long-term increase in population, even though there were fewer people being buried than were being baptised. The children baptised in the boom period of the first third of the century, do not appear to be increasing the population greatly with their own children in the period 1640-70. Similarly, the children born in the period 1640-1670 appear to do little to increase the population of the parish in the latter years of the seventeenth century, until around 1690. Employment or land opportunities may have been better elsewhere; a good proportion may have remained single rather than marry. May Pickles has recently drawn attention to the gradual depopulation of rural areas. Towns and cities grew in the seventeenth century, even when the population of the country was static, in decline or only moderately increasing. This growth must have been at the expense of rural areas.[138] Newcastle was one such example of a fast growing urban community in the seventeenth century. David Levine and Keith Wrightson have documented the huge rise in the population of the coal mining parish of Whickham, and also noted the rise in population in other coal mining parishes such as Gateshead, Ryton, and Chester-le-Street.[139] All these places were within a day's walk from Brancepeth. The employment opportunities there would have been well-known to the people from Brancepeth.

[138] M. Pickles, 'Labour Migration: Yorkshire c. 1670 to 1743', Local Population Studies, No. 57, (1996), p. 30.

[139] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, (Oxford, 1991), p. 172.

The lack of growth in the population of Brancepeth in the latter part of the seventeenth century should be observable in the number of households assessed for the Hearth Tax. Assuming that a reduction in population may result in smaller households remaining in the parish, the multiplier of 4.5 per household has been chosen.[140] The 342 households shown on the combined 1665 and 1666 assessments would therefore suggest a population of approximately 1,500, higher than the 1,300 estimated from the 1642 Protestation Returns, and lower than the estimate of 1,600 based on the households in the tithe book. Even if the multiplier 4.75 (used with the 1630 tithe book) is applied to the Hearth Tax households, the result would suggest a population of only about 1,600 people in 1665 and 1666. The high numbers of burials which persist right through the seventeenth century until around 1680 suggest that the adult population who lived in Brancepeth in the latter part of the seventeenth century may have been disproportionately made up of older people, and, perhaps, single or childless people. If there had been a healthy collection of younger married couples, more baptisms could be expected than are shown in the parish register in the latter part of the seventeenth century. It would appear therefore that after a baby boom in the first half of the seventeenth century, following national trends, population growth became almost static by the mid-seventeenth century, but picked up slightly in the 1660s. From then it declined to a point of almost nil growth in the remaining years of the century.

The patterns observable from an analysis of the parish registers accord with the snapshots of population which can be estimated using the 1630s tithe book, the Protestation Returns of 1642, the Hearth Tax Assessments of 1665 and 1666, and the Marriage Duty Act 1695 listing

[140] See Arkell's argument for using different multipliers with the Hearth Tax, Arkell, 'Multiplying Factors'.

for Tudhoe. The population of the parish seems to have been swelled with couples bearing children in the early part of the century, causing an increase in the population of the parish. However, by the mid-century, the fertility of this cohort was declining. The parents in the next generations of married couples produce less children in Brancepeth, possibly because there were fewer fertile couples living in the parish in the 1640s. Some may have married and settled elsewhere, others may have been part of the large group of people, who, according to Wrigley and Schofield, did not marry at all, and did not produce illegitimate offspring.[141] Meanwhile, the resident population continued to grow older and die, keeping the number of burials reasonably level, around the thirty per year mark. As some of these burials would have been children, the actual numbers of young people ready to marry and set up home in Brancepeth by the 1670s and 1680s appears to have declined, resulting in a decrease in baptisms in the last two decades of the century. The generation of people who were parents in the early part of the century, would nearly all have died by the 1670s. The number of baptisms and burials in the later decades suggest that there was no large scale immigration of younger married couples from other parishes.

2.6 Brancepeth and the surrounding parishes

By looking in greater detail at the marriages of Brancepeth people, it is possible to gain some insights into the connections Brancepeth people maintained in the wider social area. Marriages are defined as endogamous if both partners are from the same area. Exogenous marriages, in this situation, are those where one of the spouses came from outside Brancepeth parish.

[141] Wrigley & Schofield, Population History of England, p. 262; Laslett, World We Have Lost, pp. 161-2.

The origins of marriage partners have been used in a number of community studies, in order to assess the size and shape of the social area surrounding the parish being studied.[142] Exogamous marriages provide this kind of data. In Terling, eighty per cent of marriage partners from outside the parish came from within ten miles of Terling.[143] In Highley, numbers were rather small for comparison, but the records showed marriage partners coming from within a twenty-mile radius.[144]

Unfortunately, like most seventeenth century parish registers, the marriage records in Brancepeth parish register normally contain only the names of the two parties marrying and the date of the marriage. Nevertheless, out of the 775 marriages recorded in the register between 1600 and 1699, there were eighty-four addresses given for marriage partners who came from outside the parish. Figure 2.7 shows the numbers of marriage partners provided by other parishes in County Durham. In addition to the rural parishes shown, twelve marriage partners came from Durham City parishes, one came from Newcastle, three from Northumberland and three from Yorkshire. Predictably, the highest concentrations of marriage partners came from parishes on the boundaries of Brancepeth. This could be partly because as the radius of marriage distance widens, more parishes are included, but the results may also indicate a preference for marriage with families from the immediate social area surrounding the parish.[145]

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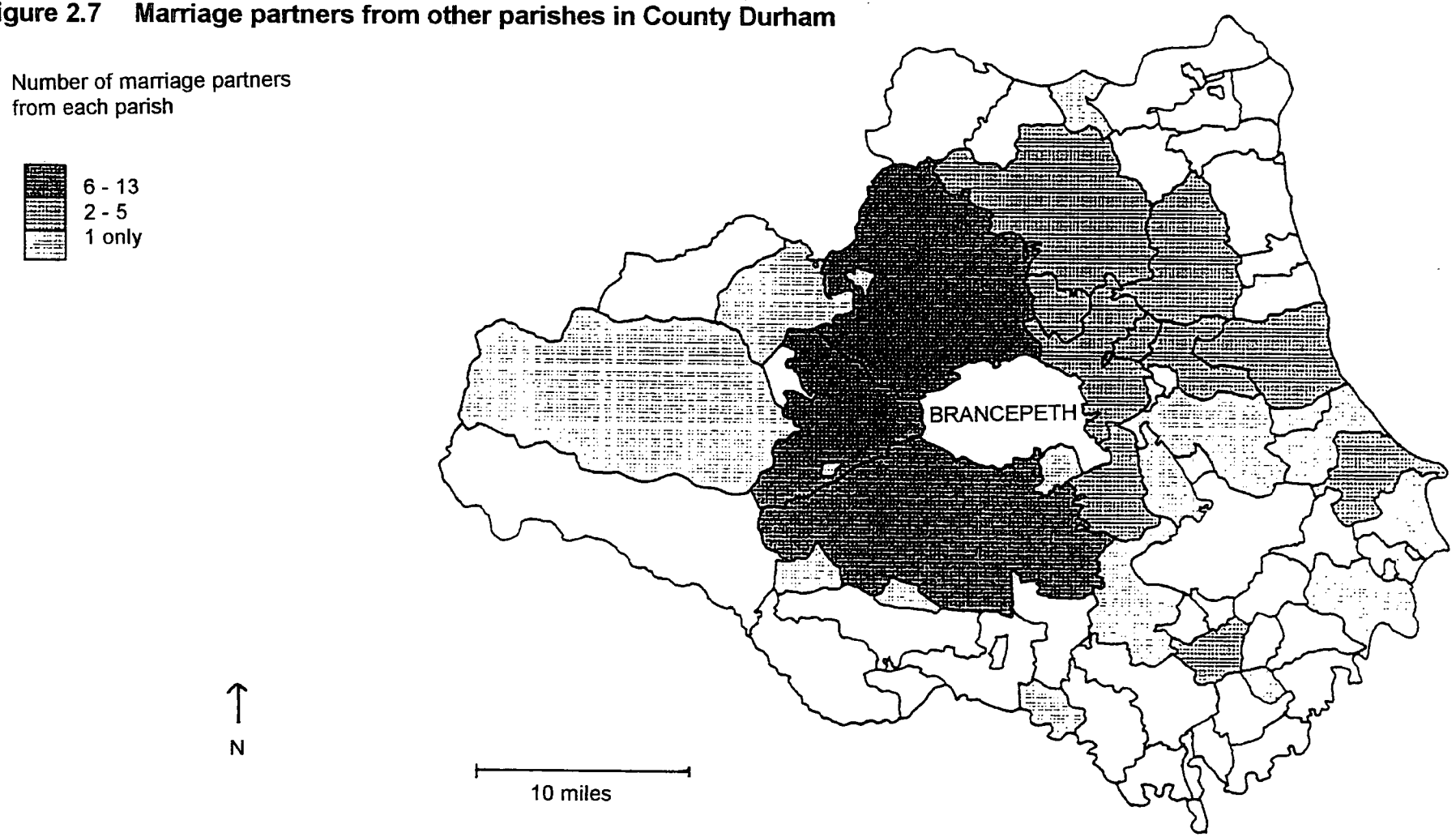
[142] e.g. Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 78; Nair, Highley: The Development of a Community 1550-1880, (Oxford, 1988), p. 152.

[143] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 77.

[144] Nair, Highley, p. 60-61.

[145] See J. Millard, 'A New Approach to the Study of Marriage Horizons', Local Population Studies, No. 28, 1982 for an explanation of the distance effect.

Figure 2.7 Marriage partners from other parishes in County Durham



The calculation of exogamy and endogamy percentages presents more problems. Because most of the records do not state an address for the bride or the groom, it cannot be assumed that those who are described as from another parish were the only ones who were not born or brought up in Brancepeth. Care is needed when interpreting what is meant by phrases such as 'of this parish', because this does not necessarily mean that the people thus described were born in the parish.[146] However, where marriage partners are identified as coming from outside the parish, the information is likely to be a reliable indicator of the parish which the bride or groom considered to be their home parish.

The most useful rough estimate of endogamy and exogamy percentages may therefore be gained by looking at the years 1629-1638, when the register entries are of a higher quality. In this ten year period, there were ninety-seven marriages recorded. In fifty-two of these marriages, addresses were given for both bride and groom. In two of these cases, neither the bride or the groom were from Brancepeth. In the fifty marriages remaining, there were twenty cases (forty per cent) where both the bride and the groom came from the parish (endogamous marriages) and thirty cases (sixty per cent) where either the bride or the groom came from outside the parish (exogamous marriages). Twenty-four of the incoming spouses were male, and six were female, perhaps suggesting that it was normal to marry in the bride's parish church. A closer inspection of the twenty endogamous marriages showed that at least nine of these marriages were endogamous within the township.[147]

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[146] See M. Carter, 'Town or urban Society?' in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850, (Leicester, 1993); and B. Maltby, 'Easingwold Marriage Horizons', Local Population Studies No. 2, 1969; J. Millard, ' A New Approach to the Study of Marriage Horizons', Local Population Studies, Vol. 28, 1982; A. J. Pain & M.T. Smith, 'Do Marriage Horizons Accurately Measure Migration', Local Population Studies, No. 33, 1984.

[147] In two of the twenty marriages, one or both of the spouses was described as of Brancepeth parish.

With such small figures, it would be dangerous to make too much of these findings. However, the brief analysis permitted by the records suggests that a substantial number of marriages were arranged locally, and that marriage within the township was not uncommon.

The size of the parish population is very significant when considering the number of marriage partners who are chosen from within the parish. In small populations, there may have been few unmarried people of suitable age. In parishes with high levels of kinship density, more potential partners may have been excluded because of kinship connections. The economy and landholding pattern of the parish is also significant. Some parishes offered few opportunities for new families or individuals to move in, to make work connections with the resident population, or to come to the parish as servants. In static, rural, peasant-like societies a higher rate of exogamous marriages may have been necessary.[148]

In Brancepeth, if the sample fifty marriages analysed are representative of the parish's exogamy and endogamy rates, this would suggest that much of the population mobility represented by surname turnover could be due to marriages with partners from outside the parish. Some of these marriage partners may have been found while working away from home, as farm servants or apprentices. Others may have been the result of farm servants coming to work in Brancepeth.[149]

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[148] See argument summarised by D. A. Coleman, 'Marital Choice and Geographical Mobility', in A. J. Boyce (ed.), Migration and Mobility, (London, 1984), p. 26.

[149] Based on the number of servants and apprentices shown in the Marriage Duty Act returns for Tudhoe in 1695, there may have been about 150 servants in the households of Brancepeth at any one time, although some of these sevants may have been from other households within the parish.

The marriage networks of some of the Brancepeth families extended into many other parishes in County Durham. This pattern of social networks was also obvious from the analysis of the godparents chosen. Brancepeth was part of a larger local society, although a high proportion of social connections were clearly local. As many of the marriage partners came from parishes which bordered Brancepeth, these marriages may have been arranged through the contacts with families who were well-known, but who lived just over the parish boundaries.[150] Some marriages took place between couples from the same township, suggesting that the influence of family, friends and the local community was likely to be significant.[151] However, young people were also able to meet suitable marriage partners from outside the parish, possibly through leaving home as a farm servant or an apprentice, or by meeting people from outside the parish who came to Brancepeth as servants or apprentices. The opportunity to make marriages within the parish, and with those from outside this population was largely dependent on the opportunities for Brancepeth people, their families and friends, to meet suitable marriage partners. To understand these opportunities better, we need to know more about the working experiences of households within the parish.

2.7 Living and working in Brancepeth

In this section I will describe the types of farming going on in different parts of the parish, and outline the evidence of other kinds of employment opportunities in the parish. This evidence will help to assess

[150] See D. O'Hara, ' "Ruled by my friends": Aspects of Marriage in the Diocese of Canterbury, c. 1540-1570', Continuity and Change, No. 6, (1991) for a discussion of the influence of kin and friends.

[151] C. Issa, 'Obligation and Choice', (Ph. D. thesis, University of St Andrews, 1987).

whether a peasant-style self-sufficiency was common, or whether many of the households had to sell their produce and services in order to make a living.[152] The Hearth Tax records and the probate inventories will be used to discuss standards of domestic comfort in the households of the parish, and the possible effects on social relationships.

The majority of the parish could hardly be described as good agricultural land. The Soil Survey of England and Wales made in 1983 categorises most of the parish as Brickfield 3 type of soil, which is seasonally waterlogged, but suitable for stock rearing and some dairy farming on permanent grassland, and winter cereals in drier lowland areas. The land near the River Browney on the east of the parish, near Littleburn, Sleetburn and Scout House is described as Foggarthorpe 1 type of soil, also seasonally waterlogged, clayey soil, suitable for grassland and cereals. A small area of land beside the River Wear running from near Willington to Sunderland Bridge is classified as having Alun soil, a permeable coarse loamy soil, found in flat land which floods easily, but useful for dairy and stock rearing, and crops where the risk of flooding is low.[153]

The seventeenth-century inhabitants of Brancepeth parish knew from experience what their soil could produce. Most of the land which was not wooded was used for pasture of sheep and cattle, or to grow rye, oats, bigg, and some wheat.[154] The 1630 tithe book can be used to observe the different kinds of produce which the parishioners brought when paying

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[152] See W. G. Hoskins, The Midland Peasant, (London, 1957) pp. 193, 200 for arguments on self-sufficiency.

[153] Soil Survey of England and Wales map and key, (Lawes Agricultural Trust, 1983), pp. 11, 17, 18.

[154] DCRO, D/Br/E77.

their tithes in kind. However, this is not a complete record of the animals grazed and crops grown in different parts of the parish, because some of the tithes due had been commuted to cash sums, and some tithes which were due were not recorded because they were not paid. In order to get a more balanced picture of the agriculture of the parish, it is necessary to consult surviving probate inventories.[155]

The surviving probate inventories for the parish of Brancepeth in the seventeenth century fortunately cover the different parts of the parish quite representatively, even though the numbers of inventories falls far short of the number of people who lived and died in the different areas of the parish. Figures 2.8 and 2.9 compare the distribution of the 183 inventories which were used in this analysis to the proportions of households in each township shown on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment. The results suggest that the probate inventories should give a useful indication of how some of the residents of different parts of the parish earned their living, when used in conjunction with the tithe book and other sources. Many of the Brancepeth inventories are very suitable for this purpose, because they detail each animal, down to the pig and sometimes even the number of hens, the stooks of hay and the acres of corn sown in the ground. However, some inventories do not show these details mainly because they were the inventories of people who were not, at the time they died, owners of crops or animals. These people were normally widows who did not run their own farm, single people who had not yet established their own household, older men who appear to have retired and may be living in the household of another family, gentry who have leased their land to others, or the small numbers of tradesmen and labourers who did not have a few sheep pastured on common land.

[155] DULASC Brancepeth Probate Inventories.

Figure 2.8 **Distribution of households by township based on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessments**

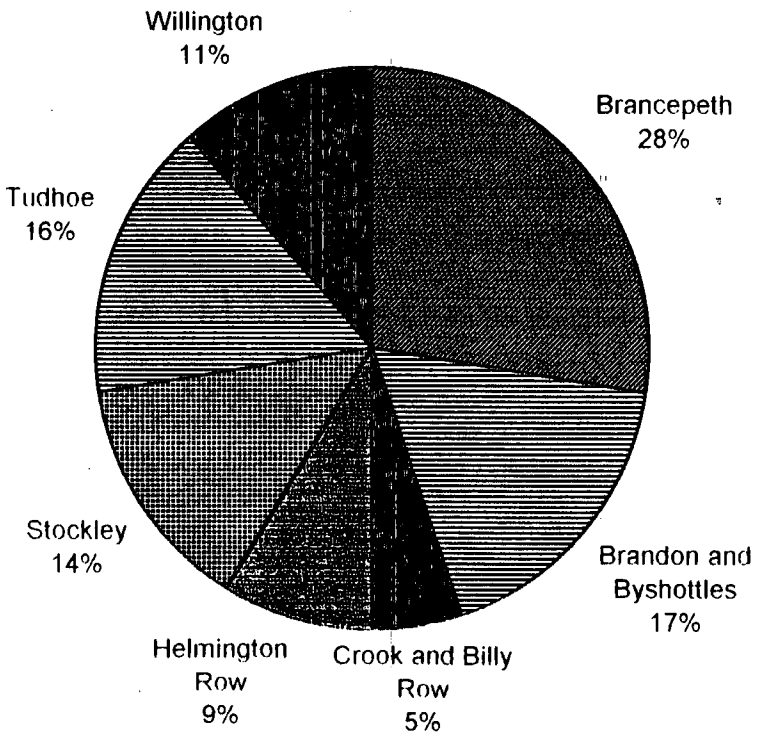
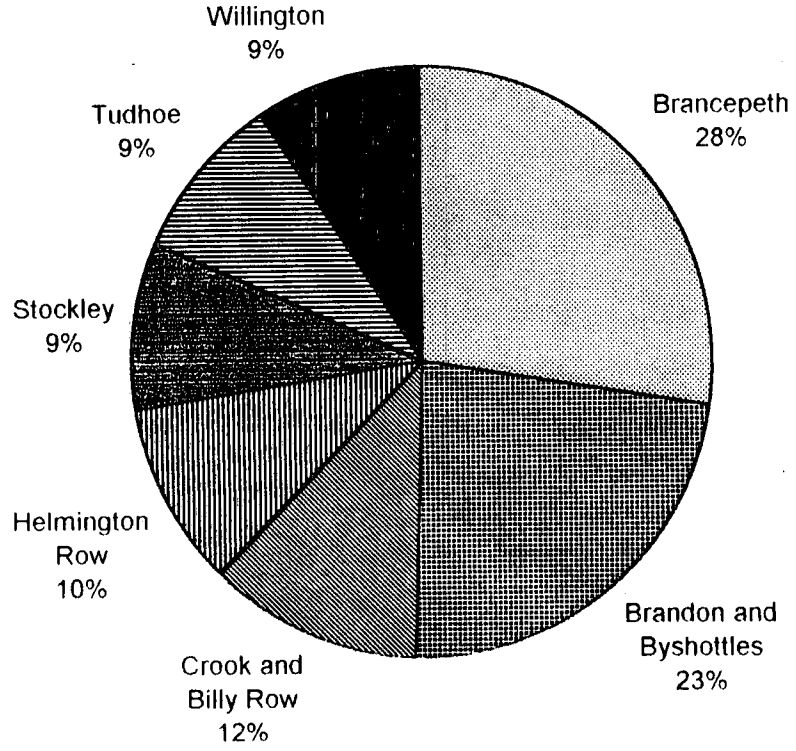


Figure 2.9 **Distribution of surviving seventeenth century inventories by township**



The appraisers who drew up the probate inventories rarely ascribed an occupation to the person whose goods they listed and valued. In a parish like Brancepeth, nearly everyone was involved in agriculture of some sort, even if it was only through grazing a few sheep on the large areas of common land.[156] Most of the inventories show that the residents believed in mixed farming; plenty of sheep, small numbers of cows, some grain, a pig, and perhaps a hive of bees. Only in the east side of the parish, in the areas outlined as suitable for crops on the modern-day soil surveys, were valuable crops included in the inventories. The inventory of Ralph Crawforth, who had been farming the freehold estate of Littleburn, itemises 'a stack of hay in ye fattening field' at £18, another stack of hay in the horse close worth £7. 10s., four oat stacks worth £10, and wheat and rye in the barn and stackgarth worth £9. His goods included plough gear and wane gear, with four oxen and three steers. He also had fifty-nine sheep, twenty-four lambs, several stags, five horses, sixteen cows and seventeen calves and bullocks.[157] A similar scale of mixed farming was going on by the banks of the River Wear, near the River Browney, at Burnigill. William Richardson, farming at Burnigill in 1660, had 'milke kine' and 'fatt kine' as well as sheep, hay, and twenty acres of corn worth £55.[158] The inventory of George Jenkinson, of Burnigill, drawn up in 1637, shows corn in the yard, as well as corn sown in the ground, worth £17 in total, £20 worth of hay, one hundred and twenty-one sheep, twenty cows and seven calves, seven oxen, six horses and three foals. In addition, he kept a hive of bees, three pigs, four geese, a cock and two hens and had dairy equipment, and a store of butter and cheese worth £7.[159] Self-

[156] DCRO, D/Br/E30, Description of the Manor of Brancepeth, 1795-6; Brancepeth Estate Catalogue ref. D/Br/P7.

[157] DULASC, Inventory of Ralph Crawforth, Littleburn, 1683.

[158] DULASC, Inventory of William Richardson, Burnigill, 1661.

[159] DULASC, Inventory of George Jenkinson, Burnigill, 1637.

sufficiency was clearly possible with this kind of mixed farming. Although many of these inventories show that there would be surplus produce to sell, the mixed farming patterns suggest that Brancepeth farmers preferred self-sufficiency to having to buy food for themselves.

The inventory of Richard Smith from Willington in 1676 shows that cattle and sheep were more valuable than grain for him. His seven cows, three heifers, four calves, two steers and two oxen were valued at £27.10, his sheep at £13. 6s. 8d, in comparison to his oats and bigg which were only valued at £6, and his hay valued at £8.[160] Roland Wall's inventory, produced in 1644 when the will was proved, shows that he had cattle worth £21, twenty-five sheep and two lambs worth £4.13s, and fifty shillings worth of wheat and rye at Willington.[161] John Robinson of Willington had cattle, oxen and sheep valued at £51, and £4 worth of corn. This kind of mix between pasture and grain is also seen in the inventories of Charles Pickering, Nicholas Brack, George Courtpenny, George Dobinson, Henry Forster and Robert Johnson, all of Willington.[162] From the evidence of these inventories, Willington appears to have been used largely for grazing cattle, although wheat, rye, oats and bigg could be successfully grown in parts of the township. Willington's town fields gave tenants the opportunity to grow some crops in the more fertile land by the River Wear, and to graze sheep on the rougher upland areas near the centre of the parish. Interestingly, the Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, describes the land by the river as useful for dairy and stock

[160] DULASC, Inventory of Richard Smith, Willington, 1676.

[161] DULASC, Roland Wall, Willington, 1644.

[162] DULASC, Inventories of Charles Pickering 1684, Nicholas Brack 1668. George Courtpenny, 1609, George Dobinson, 1639, Henry Forster, 1682, and Robert Johnstone 1623, all of Willington.

rearing, and crops - just what the seventeenth-century residents had chosen to do with the land.[163]

The soil survey showed that the rest of the parish was suitable for permanent grassland, to raise stock, and to grow cereals in lower, drier areas. However, in the drive for self-sufficiency, crops were also grown in some poor locations.[164] Cuthbert Hodgeson, whose goods including household belongings and farming stock only amounted to £12. 2s. 10d, had half an acre of oats worth 5 shillings in Crook.[165] Thomas Greenwell, farming on a larger scale at Crook, had mainly cattle and sheep, but also had '4 days plowing' of rye, oats and bigg.[166] At Mown Meadows near Crook, Cuthbert Atkinson had eighty sheep and twenty cattle; he also had rye, oats and corn in the ground valued at £10, and a pig, a goose and a gander, and cocks and hens.[167] Although the land was not good, Crook and Mown Meadows were situated in the more low-lying, sheltered areas of the township of Crook and Billy Row. The village of Billy Row could not, in comparison, be considered the least bit sheltered, perched half way up the hillside between Crook in the valley bottom and the western end of Brandon Hill. Cuthbert Jackson, who lived there in 1614, had £4 worth of corn upon the ground valued in his inventory, a good herd of cattle and a large flock of sheep. He also kept bees, which would have found plenty of nearby heather to produce valuable honey.[168] Ralph Jackson, living there in 1608, had a double acre of hard corn growing, and a double acre of

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[163] Soil Survey of England and Wales.

[164] Hoskins, Midland Peasant, pp. 193, 200.

[165] DULASC, Inventory of Cuthbert Hodgeson, 1692.

[166] DULASC, Inventory of Thomas Greenwell, 1662.

[167] DULASC, Inventory of Cuthbert Atkinson, 1645.

[168] DULASC, Inventory of Cuthbert Jackson, Billy Row, 1615.

haver (oats), as well as cattle and sheep.[169] Even in this exposed landscape, the tenants were managing to grow crops as well as pasture cattle and sheep. However, the inventory of Martin Rippon, who lived in upland conditions at Dicken House, includes no mention of crops or agricultural equipment.[170]

The eighteen inventories from Helmington Row show a mixed farming pattern.[171] In Brancepeth and Stockley, however, there were more inventories which only mentioned animal husbandry. These were inventories from people who were farming on a much smaller scale, and may reflect the experiences of the cottagers in the two villages. The animals which they kept, in some cases, such as Richard Jackson, John Morrison, and Gilbert Pattison, provided additional income for men who had a trade.[172]

The 1630s tithe book shows that there were a number of trades being worked in Brancepeth and Stockley. Stockley had a shoemaker, a smith, a turner, three tailors, four weavers and a wheelwright as well as three people working as buttermen, two bleechers, and one man earning money as a piper (musician). Brancepeth had five joiners, fourteen weavers, three tailors, a saddlewright, a smith, and eleven spurriers (makers of horses' spurs), a parish clerk and the resident clergy.

There were two mills noted in the tithe book, one at Sleetburn near Brandon, and one in Crook. Elsewhere in the parish there were small

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[169] DULASC, Inventory of Ralph Jackson, Billy Row, 1608.

[170] DULASC, Inventory of Martin Rippon, Dickenhouse, 1661.

[171] All kept at DULASC.

[172] DULASC, Inventories of Richard Jackson, Brancepeth, 1638, John Morrison, Stockley, 1639, and Gilbert Patteson, Stockley, 1618.

numbers of people who had occupations which were complementary to agricultural work. In Willington there was a carrier, a cooper (barrel maker), two skeppers (makers of skeps to be used as measures, or in bee-keeping), and one weaver. In Helmington Row there was a glover, a turner (who made items using a lathe) and a weaver. In Brandon and Byshottles there was a cooper, and two tailors. In Crook and Billy Row there was a collier and a cooper. Apart from the occupations listed there were others whose main work was in agriculture but who would supplement their income from other sources, such as coal mining.[173]

Twelve spurriers in Brancepeth and Stockley would seem to have been too many for the needs of seventeenth-century Brancepeth. Although many of the inventories examined show that it was common for the middling to prosperous kind of tenant to keep horses, it is hard to believe that all twelve spurriers could find enough work. They may, however, have begun their trade or 'calling' when Brancepeth was still required to provide horsemen for border service. The presentment of Durham horsemen in 1593 stated that Brancepeth and Raby lordships had been required to provide one hundred horsemen between them, for military service, but this arrangement had broken down by 1593.[174] Brancepeth township itself had been responsible for maintaining ten of these horsemen. Had all hundred horsemen for the Neville estates mustered at Brancepeth, there would have been work for the spurriers. By the 1630s although there were still twelve cottagers whose trade or calling was that of a spurrier, in reality most of these households were supplementing their incomes with agricultural work, as well as servicing

[173] There were coal mines in Tudhoe, Brandon, the West Park of Brancepeth. DDCL, Hunter MSS Vol. 22 Item 17; DULASC, Consistory Court Depositions, Loose Papers 1633-4, fol. 57verso; DCRO, Ep/Br/1.

[174] PRO, SP/15/32 (29 Aug. 1593).

the needs of the horses which still continued to be grazed on the commons of Brancepeth parish.

The tithe book does not detail the households of Tudhoe, so it is difficult to be sure what occupations the Tudhoe folk used to supplement their incomes from agriculture. However, a long drawn-out case in the Durham Chancery proves there was valuable coal mining going on.[175] The town fields of Tudhoe had been enclosed by agreement of twenty-two tenants in 1639, and the moor was partially enclosed in the 1660s.[176] The collection of seventeen inventories from Tudhoe show that where possible, mixed farming was normal for those who had land, but there were some testators, generally the poorer ones, who only kept animals.

There are fourteen inventories which survive from East Brandon village. These inventories show that it was normal for households to grow crops as well as keep animals in East Brandon. Even land on the top of Brandon Hill, at West Brandon, was used for growing crops as well as for animal husbandry. Crops as well as animals also appear in both inventories from Ivesley, and in the inventories from the more sheltered farms of Morley, Littlewhite and Biggin.

Clearly, the inhabitants of Brancepeth lived mainly from the land, if possible, from their own land. By keeping a pig, some cattle, sheep, hens, bees, and growing some crops, it was possible to exist without having to buy many necessities. Because most of the parish was not enclosed, it

[175] Mines taxed at 13s 4d for Ship Money in 1636. DDCL, Hunter MSS Vol. 22 Item 17; See also DCRO, D/Sa/E976, Tudhoe mines case 1655. The mines are the subject of a lengthy case in the Durham Chancery court in the 1670s. PRO, DURH/4/3, Durham Chancery Decrees and Orders Books, 1671-1706.

[176] DCRO, D/Sa/E571 Tudhoe enclosure 1639; DCRO, D/Sa/E 574-579, Enclosure of Spennymoor 1665-72.

was still possible to engage in mixed farming on a small scale. It was probably more practical for the inhabitants of Brancepeth to spread their labour more evenly over the year, making it easier to harvest their own grain, and look after their own sheep at lambing. The rector, John Cosin, who drew up the Brancepeth tithe book considered that there were only sixteen households headed by labourers in Brancepeth village, seven in Stockley, two in Helmington Row, and one in Crook. In a parish where most people managed to look after their own land and animals, it must have been difficult to find work as a labourer, supposing there were members of the household who were young and fit enough to do this kind of work.

John Cosin described 38 household heads in his parish as 'poor', or 'beggar' (often widows), and one as 'idle', presumably to note that he was unlikely, in practice, to be able to extract any tithes from these households.[177] Many were households headed by widows, but in East Brandon, where almost half those described as poor lived, there were eleven 'poor' households headed by men. Poverty levels are always hard to define, but the evidence of increased mortality in 1623 and 1674 in the Brancepeth parish registers suggest that there were people living in Brancepeth who were so poor that at times of high grain prices, they may have died of starvation or related illnesses. The constant threat of bad harvests and food shortages may partly explain the peasant-style self-sufficiency shown in the Brancepeth inventories, a lifestyle which avoided the need for money to buy grain. The small amounts of cash shown in many of these inventories also suggest that in this type of economy, it would have been easier to buy farming stock on credit, rather than to try to raise cash.

[177] DCRO, D/Br/E 77.

We will now look at the kinds of priorities for spending money, by considering house sizes and styles, and evidence of furnishings and luxury goods. The Hearth Tax assessments provide evidence of house sizes in the parish. The amount of tax payable was based on the number of hearths in the house, or subdivided house in which the household lived. Table 2.1 shows the number of hearths per household in different parts of the parish. Most of the houses of the parish had one or two hearths; only a small number of houses had three hearths or more, and these can usually be readily identified as the homes of the parish gentry, such as Lady Calverley at Littleburn, the normally absentee Swinburnes of Holywell, the Coles of Brancepeth Castle, and Mr Brabant at Page Bank.

The majority of Brancepeth residents lived in houses with only one or two hearths. This fits with the picture provided by the probate inventories surviving from the period, which rarely list rooms, unless the person who has died clearly had a lot of domestic possessions. In contrast, the inventory of Lady Calverley's house at Littleburn, dated 1674 mentions a hall, a dining room, a parlour, the nursery, the red chamber, the new chamber, a study, the Cannaby chamber, the west chamber, the green chamber, the kitchen, larder, and scullery.[178] The house was assessed at twelve hearths in 1665. Although Brancepeth Castle was much larger and more imposing than Littleburn, it was assessed on only ten hearths in 1665. The number of hearths in a dwelling reflect its building style as well as the affluence of its occupant.[179] The older hall-house style of building, used for a more communal style of living, required fewer hearths than more modern houses built with domestic comfort and

[178] DULASC, Inventory of Elizabeth Calverley, 1674.

[179] C. Husbands, 'Hearths, Wealth and Occupations', in K. Schurer and T. Arkell, (eds.) Surveying the People, Oxford, 1992), p. 68.

Table 2.1 Number of hearths per household based on combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment (including households exempt from taxation)

TOWNSHIP	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH					
	1	2	3	4	5	6 + Hearths
Brancepeth	57	26	3	4	0	4
Stockley	37	7	1	0	1	1
Willington	31	8	0	0	0	0
Helmington Row	27	3	0	0	0	0
Crook & Billy Row	9	5	3	1	0	0
Brandon & Byshottles	34	15	3	3	1	3
Tudhoe	48	5	1	0	0	1

privacy in mind. The inventory of John Brabant's house at Page Bank in 1687 details a hall, dining room, a chamber over the dining room, a little room over the stair head, the hall chamber and the kitchen, and the chamber over the back stairs.[180] This matches the assessment of the house in 1665 as a six-hearth house. However, it would be misleading to treat the number of hearths in houses as a readily comparable indicator of the wealth of the inhabitants, particularly in northern England, where the hall-house style of dwelling was still common. Although Mr Brabant's house had half as many hearths as Lady Calverley's, the final value of his inventoried assets was almost double that of hers.

The inventories which have survived from Brancepeth, however, are not very useful as an indication of the typical assets of householders dying in Brancepeth over the course of the seventeenth century. The poorest people are unlikely to have had an inventory drawn up for them. However, the inventories which survive from Brancepeth cover people in a wide variety of circumstances, from gentlemen to substantial yeomen, to husbandmen and traders, widows, spinsters, young men and old men who do not appear to have their own household. The detailed descriptions of goods given in inventories can provide very useful indications of standards of living in Brancepeth for at least some of the residents.

Surveying the Brancepeth inventories which survive, the inventories valued at less than £25 generally contain no non-essential items, although Richard Bushby of Low Wooley, whose assets were valued at only £9. 7s. 10d in 1676, had two little books worth one shilling.[181] Widows' inventories in this category sometimes include hints of

[180] DULASC, Inventory of John Brabant 1687.

[181] DULASC, Inventory of Richard Bushby 1676.

the lifestyle they were used to before they were widowed. Margaret Byers, a widow from Brancepeth, had two glass cases amongst her possessions which were in total valued at only £24. 11s. 5d. in 1680, even though she was living in a house which had a hall, parlour, kitchen and two upstairs rooms. Most of her goods were household possessions, although she did have cattle, sheep and corn growing on the ground, worth £11 in total.[182] Unmarried sons and daughters, living in the parental home, did not need a large amount of personal belongings. Elizabeth Arrowsmith, a spinster of Brancepeth, whose personal goods were valued at only £6. 1s. 6d. in 1673, had five silver rings among her possessions.[183]

In the Brancepeth inventories which were valued at less than £100, it is unusual to see non-essential goods. Many inventories in this category, and above, show that all the deceased's money was invested in stock, land, and necessary work gear. Any surplus was lent out to others, rather than used to buy non-essentials to improve the comfort of the home.

The valuable goods which appear in the inventories of those whose assets amounted to two or three hundred pounds are the silver plate items, probably family heirlooms. Only a very small number of homes detailed in the Brancepeth inventories contained goods such as the clock owned by Henry Atkinson of Brancepeth, who had assets valued at £518. 5s. in 1697, and the books, three guns and a clock, owned by Cuthbert Jackson of Helmington Row, whose assets were valued at £470. 16s. 8d. in 1676.[184] Thomas Hull's house in Stockley was furnished with a drawing

[182] DULASC, Inventory of Margaret Byers 1680.

[183] DULASC, Inventory of Elizabeth Arrowsmith 1673.

[184] DULASC, Inventories of Henry Atkinson 1697 and Cuthbert Jackson 1676.

table and two lesser tables, a desk, two furnished beds, and a close stool, as well as the kind of furniture normally noted in the Brancepeth inventories. He also had a bible, a service book, three prayer books and six other small books. His goods, including £16 in desperate debts, amounted to £185. 17s. 10d. However, the majority of inventories from Brancepeth in this period provide a picture of simply furnished homes and a general absence of non-essential luxury goods.[185]

The evidence presented in this section suggests that many people in Brancepeth were not actively caught up in a market economy, buying goods from others on a regular basis, or regularly selling large amounts of surplus produce. Households seem to have preferred self-sufficiency, which may have involved fewer contacts outside the parish than households who were more commercially orientated. The inventories show that few homes contained non-essential goods as conspicuous signs of wealth. In most of the homes of the parish, meals with kin and neighbours would have been eaten off wooden trenchers or pewter dishes. Few obvious signs of wealth would have differentiated social groups within the parish, except the gentry. For those below the level of gentry, the culture of self-sufficiency and traditional one or two hearth sparsely furnished houses provided the setting for social relationships between households.

2. 8 Continuity or change?

There are few sources which help to assess the changes which Brancepeth experienced in the later seventeenth century. However, surname turnover can be used to estimate how many old Brancepeth

[185] See L. Wetherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760', (London, 1988) for a survey of the incidence of types of goods in inventories.

families remained in the parish by the later part of the century. It seems reasonable to compare the surnames in the tithe book (drawn up in 1630) with the surnames of the householders on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax Assessment, as they were both intended to list all the households which could be assessed for tithe and tax respectively. Unfortunately Tudhoe township cannot be included in this analysis, because Tudhoe households are not individually listed in the 1630s tithe book.

Using the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment, excluding Tudhoe, 165 separate surnames were identified. Fifty-six per cent of these surnames were found amongst the householders of the parish, shown in the 1630s tithe book. Considering that some surnames disappear through the lack of a male heir, it would suggest that few families chose to move away from Brancepeth. This meant limited opportunities for newcomers. The turnover of surnames in the thirty-five years between 1630 and 1665-6, (forty-four per cent of names were new) can be compared to the turnover of surnames in the fifty-nine years between 1570 and 1629, (just over fifty per cent of surnames were new). The low turnover of surnames in the parish in both periods suggests that in Brancepeth there was a sizeable stable group of families who did remain in the parish from generation to generation.[186]

Many of the inhabitants of the parish, even in the 1660s, would have been able to trace their ancestors back to the 'semifeudal tenantry who rode from Durham with the northern earls in 1569', as Keith Wrightson and David Levine so aptly described them.[187] Although life was

[186] These figures can be compared to the survey of surname turnover studies presented in Coleman, 'Marital Choice', p. 33.

[187] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p.10.

hardly satisfactory for these families during the period when Henry Sanderson exploited the resources of the Lordship, and Thomas Emerson tried to impose massive rent increases, despite all this, many of these tenants stayed on. Although hounded for their recusancy, many families held to the 'old religion', and were joined by others. The tenants of Brancepeth continued to make a living, although there was very little evidence of improving domestic comfort and privacy. Most householders remained, in their terms, 'yeomen', farmers of their own land.[188] In the following chapter, the economic circumstances in which most of the families lived will be explored more fully than the methods used so far have made possible.

Brancepeth parish is a very suitable place to study families and neighbourhood relationships. The stability of surnames within the parish makes it a promising parish for the Family Reconstitution, which is needed as a basis for record linkage and social network analysis. The existence of a number of settlements within a large and varied geographical area, makes the definition of neighbourhoods possible. In terms of kinship and neighbourliness, we need to consider whether Brancepeth may have maintained the lifestyle and traditional community values of a medieval-style society, surviving from the times of the Earls of Westmorland.

[188] D. Cressy, 'Social Status and Literacy in North East England 1560-1630', Local Population Studies, No. 21, (1978), p. 22.

Chapter 3 Families, Wealth and Status in Brancepeth

3.1 Reconstructing the historical community of Brancepeth

In order to examine the social networks which created community within Brancepeth parish, it was necessary to attempt as full as possible a historical reconstruction of the resident population of the parish throughout the century. This chapter outlines the methodologies which were employed to reconstruct the population of Brancepeth; Family Reconstitution and record linkage. The chapter will discuss the quality of linkage between the Family Reconstitution and other kinds of records (wills, inventories, land records, the Hearth Tax, and the church seating plan). The chapter will conclude by assessing the levels of status, wealth and poverty amongst the reconstituted population. This work will make it possible to assess whether the social networks of the reconstituted population of Brancepeth were between people who were more or less of similar status and wealth in the local community, or whether there was a very obvious hierarchy based on wealth and poverty.

3.2 The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth

In a parish with a population of around 1500 people, it is highly likely that more than one person shared the same name, particularly if the period of study extends over 100 years. To attempt to reconstruct the historical community of Brancepeth using a name index only could have led to many wrong assumptions and, in the end, confusion about the life histories of those represented. It was necessary to use a method which could provide coherent pictures of the life-cycles of families living in different parts of the parish at different times during the course of the century. To this baseline information, other records could then be linked.

Family Reconstitution, as developed in England by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, was the methodology chosen for the reconstruction of the biological family groups who resided in Brancepeth long enough to have their family's vital events recorded in the parish register. Family Reconstitution uses parish register information to create biological family groups made up of parents and children. Baptisms are matched to marriages, and burials to members of family groups. Re-marriages are linked to previous marriages, and the marriages of children are linked to their families of origin. The outcome is a series of family reconstitution forms (usually referred to as FRFs) which show a marriage, any children born to that marriage and, where known, the marriages of the children, the burials of the family members and the remarriages of spouses. From large numbers of FRFs, covering a lengthy time span, it is possible to calculate information, such as the average age at which men and women married for the first time, the average number of children born to couples whose marriage was not broken by the early death of one of the partners, infant and child mortality statistics, and the life-expectancy of married adults.

The process of producing a Family Reconstitution by hand, using slips of paper detailing each baptism, marriage and burial, is described step-by-step in Wrigley's outline of Family Reconstitution, published in 1966.[1] This process has been translated into a computer program by the Cambridge Group. Essentially, the computer assesses the possibility that a baptism or burial can be linked to a particular marriage, and awards a linking score to the match, based on the quantity and accuracy of the matching information. Similarly, other possible matches are scored. The

[1] E. A. Wrigley, 'Family Reconstitution' in E. A. Wrigley, (ed.), An Introduction to English Historical Demography, (London, 1966).

computer selects the highest scored links, in order to allot baptisms to marriages, burials to members of family groups etc., then deletes the links which are incompatible with the matches made. In Family Reconstitution, the matching process is not dependent on making links between records in any particular order.

The computerised version of Family Reconstitution is likely to be more accurate than the manual method, because standard matching rules are applied automatically, and are not dependent on the memory and concentration of a human researcher.[2] Although the computerised version of Family Reconstitution might appear to be a very tightly controlled methodology, it is not inflexible. The programs can be altered to be responsive to the individual characteristics of the parish which is being reconstituted. There are no published guides to the processes which the researcher needs to complete for the computerised version of Family Reconstitution. It is therefore necessary to provide a brief explanation of the issues considered before going ahead with the Family Reconstitution, and a description of how the Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth was carried out.

For Family Reconstitution to be successful, a good number of families within the parish should be reconstitutable with a high level of confidence.[3] This is most easily achieved where there are a number of family groups who remain in the parish for at least a generation. Family Reconstitution in parishes with populations where there was a great deal

[2] R. Schofield, 'Automatic Family Reconstitution: The Cambridge Experience', Historical Methods, Vol. 25, No. 2, (1992).

[3] An average-size parish of about 500 people could be expected to yield about 200 - 300 useful FRF's, over a period of a century. See E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen, and R. S. Schofield, English Population from Family Reconstitution, (Cambridge, 1997), p. 20.

of movement in and out of the parish, such as Liverpool, has proved very difficult, because so few families can be traced throughout the family life cycle.[4] Brancepeth's apparently quite stable population made it a promising parish for a successful Family Reconstitution.

E. A. Wrigley laid down strict criteria for the selection of suitable parishes for Family Reconstitution.[5] Brancepeth, though not perfect, matched up well to the criteria laid down by Wrigley. As outlined in chapter two, there are only a few very short periods of defective registration of baptisms and burials. The quality of the entries are generally good. Nearly all baptisms and burials included addresses. The addresses given were either villages, townships, hamlets or individual farmhouses. There were no very common surnames. From 1628-39 the records contain an extraordinary amount of additional detail. Baptisms normally show the first name of the mother as well as the father, the date of birth as well as date of baptism. Burials show the date of death as well as the date of burial. Marriages from this period often show the names and addresses of the bride and groom's parents, the marital status of the bride and groom, and whether the marriage was by licence or banns. This style of recording is also resumed for a short period from July 1642 to September 1644. The main deficiency in the parish register information was widows' first names, which were not always given in the burial entries.

The Cambridge Group's Family Reconstitution programs which were used for the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution were written in Algol 68, to run on a mainframe computer. The record format required for these

[4] M. Power, F. Lewis and D. Ascott, 'Linking Demographic, Probate and Other Records in the Study of 17th and 18th Century Liverpool', a paper given at the Historical Demography and the Computer-Aided Reconstruction of Communities Conference, University of Liverpool, (1994).

[5] Wrigley, 'Family Reconstitution'.

programs was quite complex. Because the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution was done using the original registers, it was decided to design data entry forms to collect the information from the register, so that data entry services could be used to create the computer records.[6] Appendix 1 shows the data entry forms and the format of each type of computer record, in ASCII text format.

All the records were entered on computer in original spellings. To enable the computer to recognise matching names, name indexes had to be compiled. Although the Soundex Code was used to suggest possible matches,[7] these possibilities were checked manually, based on local pronunciation, and the evidence of other historical records showing names being used interchangeably. Each surname and first name was given an alpha-numerical three part code, making it possible for the computer to link surnames which could be, but were not necessarily the same, e.g. Robson and Robinson, but to give them a lower linking score than variants which were definitely the same name, e.g. Fewster and Fuster. A similar index was created for first names, making it possible for the computer to recognise variant spellings and shortened names, such as Beley, as a possible match with Isabel and Elizabeth. The place names index allowed the computer to link places which were described in different terminology, e.g. Mickley and Ovingham (Mickley is in Ovingham parish).

The Brancepeth Family Reconstitution contained over 3,800 baptism records, over 2,600 burial records, and over 750 records of

[6] The data entry forms were designed by me. The data entry services were provided by the University of Durham Computer Centre.

[7] C. Stephenson, 'The Methodology of Historical Census Record Linkage: A User's guide to the Soundex', Journal of Family History, Vol. 5, (1980).

marriages. The Family Reconstitution programs used these records to produce over 1,800 FRFs. Figure 3.1 shows a sample computer output of an FRF produced by the computer method. This format is similar to the FRFs which are produced when doing Family Reconstitution by hand, although the computer printout only shows the most useful information which is on file about the particular family group, and provides references to other FRFs which are connected to the family group shown. It should be noted that an FRF shows only the legitimate offspring of one marriage; if either of the partners remarried, a separate FRF would be created for each remarriage. Likewise, a family who lived in the parish, moved away then moved back, may have two FRFs, one for each period of residence in the parish.

The computerised version of the FRF shows the linking scores which have been given to each matched parish register entry. Figure 3.1, column B shows these linking scores. The higher the score, the higher the probability that this is a true link. The scores shown for the links within FRFs make it easier to note the possibility that some records could have been placed in another FRF.

Some historians may be distinctly uneasy about working with the probability rather than the certainty that an individual is the person who is allotted to a particular FRF. However, when working with social history records from the seventeenth century which deal with individuals below the level of gentry, only a naive researcher would suggest that it is ever possible to say that a community could be reconstituted with absolute certainty. Family Reconstitution as developed by the Cambridge Group

Figure 3.1 An FRF produced by the computer method of Family Reconstitution

Columns A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
545									
wife bap	(12)	11036	19-11-1620	MARY	JACKSON GEORGE, TODDOW		185	545 (3-10-1654)	
husb bap	(12)	11493	18- 7-1630	ROBERTUS	CUMMING GEORGIO, LE BURNE	CUMMING MARGARETA, LE BURNE	40196	545 (3-10-1654)	
MARRIAGE			3-10-1654		COMMYN ROBERT, WEAVER, HEMLINGTON ROW	JACKSON MARIE, HEMLINGTON ROW			
child bap	(17)	12529	8- 7-1655	WILLIAM	CUMMYNG ROBERT, HELMELANDROW		545	40202 (25-12-1681)	
child bap	(16)	12692	5- 6-1659	JANE	COMMYN ROBERT, HELMELANDROW		545		61925 (20- 2-1666)
child bur	(14)	61925	20- 2-1666	JANE	COMMYNG ROBERT, -				
wife bur	(19)	62318	31-10-1684		COMIN ROBT, HELMONDONROW	COMIN MARY			
husb remar	(14)	40203	8-6-1690		COMIN ROB, HELMENDONROW				

KEY

- **A** Marriage number and description of record
- **B** Linking score - the higher the score, the more likely the link is correct
- **C** Record number allocated at data entry stage
- **D** Date of event (baptism, marriage or burial)
- **E** First name of person baptised or buried
- **F** Details of father or husband
- **G** Details of mother or wife
- **H** Marriage number showing baptism of person
- **I** Marriage number which shows own marriage and date of marriage
- **J** Child burial record and date of burial

makes the historian face and acknowledge these uncertainties in a way that other methods of working often do not.[8]

Whilst the problems of wrong linkages reduce to insignificance when large numbers of cases are aggregated to produce population history, in the case of the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution, wrong linkages could cause misinterpretation of other historical evidence. The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth was done in order to make a sound basis for linking information from a wide variety of records about individuals who lived in the parish, rather than as the basis for a demographic study. For these reasons, it was very important to recognise levels of certainty for individual links, and to find ways of minimising linkage error.

Family Reconstitution for demographic purposes uses only parish register data. Because the Brancepeth Reconstitution was needed as the basis for a community reconstitution, it was decided to compare the FRFs produced by the first processing of the Family Reconstitution with other available evidence. This was to check and improve the accuracy of the FRFs achieved by the first processing of the Reconstitution and to make modifications before re-running the Family Reconstitution linking program. The main source of evidence for this check were wills. The decision to use information from wills was made with the knowledge that this could bias the results; the FRFs of will-makers could end up more accurately reconstituted than other FRFs. However, the effect of correcting any obviously wrong links among the families identified in wills would also benefit the other FRFs in the Reconstitution which could not be checked using wills. If a child was found to have been placed on the wrong FRF,

[8] I. Winchester, 'On referring to ordinary historical persons', in E. A. Wrigley, (ed.), Identifying People in the Past, (London, 1973).

discovering this made it possible to place the child on an alternative FRF. In the Brancepeth Reconstitution there were usually only two contending FRFs for the same baptisms, so correcting the FRF matched to the will could correct another FRF at the same time. Wills identifying the first names of widows were particularly helpful where their first names were not given in the burial register.

It is important to recognise that the will-making population in a parish is not necessarily representative of all sections of the community.[9] The survival of wills in the Durham Probate Records has been affected by negligent keeping of archives in the nineteenth century.[10] However, the bias is not all due to preservation problems; many people did not make wills at all. A study using wills in the Nottinghamshire area has suggested that in some communities particular families had a tradition of will-making.[11] Wills were particularly relevant for those who had goods to dispose of, and whose wishes needed to be clearly elaborated. For some people a will was only important if there was no wife and heir, or if a supervisor (trustee) for children was needed.[12] The 175 wills from Brancepeth are predominantly those of older males, mostly married men, but some young men, widows and spinsters are also represented.[13]

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[9] R. T. Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury, 1550-1800', Journal of Family History, Vol. 4, (1979), p. 352.

[10] Public Record Office, Deputy Keeper's 16th Report, 1855.

[11] A. Mitson, 'The Significance of Kinship Networks in the Seventeenth Century: South-West Nottinghamshire, in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850', (Leicester, 1993).

[12] W. Coster, 'To Bring them Up in the Fear of God: Guardianship in the Diocese of York, 1500 - 1668', Continuity and Change, No. 10, Part 1, (1995), pp. 14-15.

[13] Johnson also found that the wills of married men were predominant in his study of eight Lincolnshire parishes. J. A. Johnson, 'Family, Kin and Community, 1567-1800', Rural History, Vol. 6 No. 2, (1995).

The contents of these wills were checked against the FRFs produced by the first processing of the Family Reconstitution. The results were remarkably encouraging. The computer had allotted many children to the correct FRFs, and where it had not, there was an obvious explanation. Cross checking with the wills made it possible to add some widows' names, and therefore to match them more accurately to their marriages. The main problem which emerged was that the computer was matching the burials of people whose wills showed that they had been born before the register began in 1599, with children of the same names born within the time-span of the Reconstitution. This is one of the 'start-up' problems encountered in Family Reconstitution studies, which is why some demographic evidence cannot be utilised until up to fifty years into the period of Reconstitution.[14] Because the Brancepeth Reconstitution was checked against wills it was possible to identify this problem. Closer inspection of the Reconstitution showed that in the Brancepeth register, children's' burials were normally described as 'son' or 'daughter'. Before the Family Reconstitution computer program was re-run, the program was modified so that burials of children had to be described as 'son' or 'daughter' of someone.

The first run of the Family Reconstitution also included FRFs where the family implausibly moved back and forth between two farms. It was decided that because there were few labourers in Brancepeth and the population appeared to have secure tenancies, that address links should be weighted more heavily in this particular Family Reconstitution. In the re-run of the Family Reconstitution the effect of this was to improve the allocation of children between FRFs, and to make more convincing histories of families living at particular farms.

[14] Wrigley, Davies et al., Family Reconstitution, p. 25.

In the results of the first run of the Reconstitution, the FRFs from Tudhoe were less complete than in other parts of the parish. As a result of some discoveries of Tudhoe names in the register of nearby Whitworth parish, the register of Whitworth parish was checked and found to contain baptisms and burials of people described as 'of Tudhoe'; in some cases this was further clarified as 'in Brancepeth parish'.[15] The clergy of Whitworth appear to have openly offered the facilities of their parish church to their neighbours, perhaps when it would have been difficult to cross the River Wear to make the long journey to Brancepeth church. These extra records were added before the re-run of the Family Reconstitution. The result was to produce more complete-looking FRFs in Tudhoe.

The shortage of recorded marriages in the second part of the seventeenth century had caused the computer to create a large number of 'dummy' marriage dates for couples who were having children baptised in Brancepeth, presumably as residents of the parish. This procedure is a normal part of the Family Reconstitution process, necessary because couples often moved to the parish after marriage, sometimes in the middle of their child-bearing years. Marriages which were already in existence at the start of the reconstitution are also given a 'dummy' marriage date. The 'dummy' marriage date is the same date as the baptism of the first child recorded in the reconstitution, showing that a marriage was in existence at that date. External to the parish register there was considerable evidence of Brancepeth marriages in the form of the Durham Marriage Bonds, and references to marriages of Brancepeth people in other parish registers, particularly St. Nicholas in Durham, where the mayor performed marriages

[15] DCRO, Typescript index to Whitworth Parish Register; Whitworth Parish Register, Ep/Whi 1.

in the 1650s.[16] Obviously, all these couples did not necessarily settle in Brancepeth. It would have added an abnormally high number of apparently childless marriages to the population of Brancepeth if all these marriages had been included in the Brancepeth Reconstitution. These records were therefore only used to replace 'dummy' marriage dates with real marriage dates where the name of the groom and date of the marriage licence looked compatible with the date of the first child of the marriage recorded in the Brancepeth register. The Family Reconstitution was also checked for any errors which had not been eliminated at the processing stage, including transcription errors, such as mixing up wives and daughters, or wrongly-transcribed dates.

These kind of changes, checks and additions improved the accuracy of the second processing of the Family Reconstitution. The results of this were then re-checked, and minor alterations made. An example of this was where the computer program had allowed a sister and brother to marry, because there were no rules in the program preventing this. The problem was easily corrected by swapping the brother with the groom of the same name. The Family Reconstitution finally produced almost 1,900 'marriages' or FRFs, over 100 spare baptisms (mostly illegitimate) and over 700 spare burials (including older people who died in the first half of the century, and left no other records in the parish register).

Although the usual outcome of a Family Reconstitution is demographic information, the Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth has not been used for this purpose. One hundred years of records, although a massive data processing exercise, are insufficient to produce unbiased

[16] DULASC, Typescript list of Durham Marriage Bonds; H. M. Wood, (ed.), The Registers of St Nicholas Church, Durham, Vol. 1, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1918).

demographic data in a number of key areas, due to the 'start up' problem outlined in the Cambridge Group's recent publication, English Population History From Family Reconstitution.[17] Calculations of mortality based on only 100 years of records would bias averages to those dying at younger ages, because both their baptism and burial are more likely to be recorded during the period of observation. Similarly, age at marriage would more frequently be discovered for couples who married young, whose baptisms and marriages appeared within the period of observation, than those who married for the first time at 50, because their baptisms and their marriages are less likely to both fall within the period of observation. Likewise, marriages which lasted only a short period of time would be more frequently discovered in the hundred year period than marriages which lasted over twenty-five years.

In contrast, some pieces of demographic information could have been calculated, such as infant and child mortality, the percentage of brides who were pregnant before marriage, and the illegitimacy ratio.[18] However, isolated pieces of demographic information are of limited value, if they cannot be related together to produce a convincing explanation of the demographic characteristics of the parish which has been reconstituted. The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth was done as a basis for the reconstruction of the social networks between Brancepeth families. The limited amount of reliable demographic information which could be calculated from the Family Reconstitution would not be particularly relevant to the main theme of this thesis. It was therefore decided to spend time on the more productive exercise of linking other records to the Family Reconstitution.

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[17] Wrigley, Davies et al., Family Reconstitution, p. 57.

[18] P. Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations, (Cambridge, 1977), p. 134.

3.3 Record linkage in Brancepeth

Although the general principles of record linkage were established over twenty years ago, historians are still developing ways of resolving some of the problems associated with record linkage. The debate is in the detail of how the record linkage is conducted; how conflicting information is resolved, and whether it is possible to link records automatically by computer.[19] King's work has shown some of the difficulties in linking other kinds of records to a Family Reconstitution. However, this may be due to the specific circumstances of the large West Riding parishes studied, in the eighteenth century, in an area and a period when non-conformity affected parochial registration.[20] This study of Brancepeth in the seventeenth century provides an opportunity to explore the quality of record linkage possible in a different kind of parish, in an earlier period. In this section I will explain the methodology of record linkage used in this study.

Once the Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth was complete, the next stage was to link information from a variety of other sources. As King has recently argued, the success in some record linkage exercises depends partly on the order in which the records are linked.[21] Although this does not apply to the Cambridge Group's method of Family Reconstitution, when linking other kinds of records, the order of linkage

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[19] Papers by R. Davies and E. Garrett, 'Combining Census and Vital Registration Data'; S. King, 'Making Lives and Histories: Nominal Linkage through Nineteenth Century Sources'; and P. Tilley, 'Record Linkage for Nineteenth-Century Censuses: Art or Science?', given at the Association for History and Computing (UK Branch) Annual Conference, Computers in Local Historical Research, University of Teesside, (1998).

[20] See S. King, 'Historical Demography, Life-Cycle Reconstruction and Family Reconstitution: New Perspectives', History and Computing, Vol. 8, No. 2, (1996).

[21] King, 'Making Lives and Histories'.

can be significant. The more information which is available on individuals, the more difficult it becomes to link wrong information to an individual shown on an FRF. For example, if a low-value inventory is linked to an individual shown on an FRF, questions would have to be answered before an obviously rich testator's will were matched to the same FRF. By ordering the process of record linkage, based on the likelihood of linking accurately, it is possible to link more accurately than by selecting different types of record at random.

No attempt was made to link other records to the Family Reconstitution by automatic computer processes. Researchers attempting community reconstructions using automatic methods often have great problems with computer matches which human judgement finds incompatible.[22] Enormous amounts of time and expertise need to be invested to produce record linkage programs which are as refined as the Cambridge Group's Family Reconstitution program. In this study it was decided to match the relatively modest amount of additional records to the Family Reconstitution by hand, using computer spreadsheets to store and sort the data.

Predictably, it was only possible to link information from other sources to some of the FRFs produced by the Family Reconstitution. One of the limitations of Family Reconstitution is that the families which are fully reconstitutable throughout the family life-cycle represent the families which remain in the parish for a generation or so, not the more mobile elements of society.[23] There are others who married before the reconstitution started, or died after the reconstitution ended. In addition to

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[22] Tilley, 'Record Linkage'.

[23] S. Ruggles, 'Migration, Marriage, and Mortality: Correcting Sources of Bias in English Family Reconstitutions', Population Studies No. 46, (1992), p. 507.

the families which appear in the Family Reconstitution, there are others who temporarily reside in the parish without even leaving a record of their existence in the parish records, but who leave their mark in other types of record, perhaps as witnesses or offenders in a court case. The schoolmaster of Willington in Brancepeth parish, for example, who appears as a witness in a court case in 1629 does not appear in the Family Reconstitution. One witness said that the schoolmaster had only lived in Willington about seven years. He was said to be a very poor man, (school teachers could be very poorly paid), and may have moved on without marrying, having children or being buried in the parish.[24]

The main types of additional information which could be linked to a large number of the Brancepeth FRFs consisted of evidence of financial and social status. Inventories were normally drawn up soon after death, which made them the easiest records to match to burials. Following the inventories were the wills, which often matched with the inventories, and where no inventories remained, they normally preceded the date of burial by a few weeks. The next main class of records to be linked were the land records, followed by the Hearth Tax records. These sets of records made it possible to build up financial profiles of the wealth structure of the reconstituted population. By linking the church seating plan of 1639, which showed the householders ordered according to their 'several degrees and qualities',[25] the links between wealth and social status could be examined. By linking each type of record to the completed Family Reconstitution, it is possible to compare whether the reconstituted families were typical of the families represented in the other kinds of records.

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[24] DUASC Durham Consistory Court Depositions DDRV/12, fol. 202.

[25] Brancepeth Church (destroyed in church fire of 1998), Church Seating Plan (18th Century Copy of 1639 original). The original 1639 plan has never been traced.

3.4 Linking wills and inventories

Of the 186 inventories which survive from seventeenth-century Brancepeth, 116 (sixty-two per cent) were traceable to the Family Reconstitution. A further thirty-five were matched to the spare burials. Of the inventories which could not be matched to the FRFs, some were from the earlier years of the century, and appear to be those of older people, who were past the stage of having children baptised by the start of the Family Reconstitution, and therefore do not appear on an FRF. Others were single people who could not be matched with accuracy to an FRF, and some appear to have been newcomers to Brancepeth, often also having land or connections elsewhere.

Before looking specifically at the inventories which can be matched to the Family Reconstitution, it was decided to study the values of all the available Brancepeth inventories. Margaret Spufford rightly warns about the dangers of using probate inventories to assess the wealth of individuals.[26] Many probate inventories do not include debts owed by the person who died, although money from debts due to the deceased person is often recorded. This was particularly noticeable to Spufford in her study of chapmen. She suggested that administration accounts and wills should be used in conjunction with inventories, in order to take into account the balance between debt and credit and also the value of legacies specified in wills.[27] Bearing in mind the points made by Spufford, the Brancepeth inventories are particularly useful. It seems to have been a local practice to make a note of debts owed by the deceased on the actual inventory itself on some occasions, and where significant, to value the legacies

[26] M. Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in J. Chartres and D. Hey, (eds.), English Rural Society, 1500-1800, (Cambridge, 1990).

[27] Spufford, 'Limitations', pp. 153-174.

where they are not included in the inventory. Some inventories include a note of the funeral expenses, presumably if relatives need to claim the costs directly out of the estate. The inventories normally distinguish between good debts owed to the deceased and debts which were 'desperate', i.e. unlikely ever to be paid. The loans of money in the Brancepeth inventories seem to have been made quite locally, and would therefore be easier to find out about at the time the inventory was drawn up. In comparison, the chapmen's inventories which Spufford discusses included debts from customers and debts to suppliers, many of whom were not local. The people who were called upon to draw up the inventories would have had great difficulty in catching up with all these liabilities and assets. In Brancepeth, there are a small number of surviving tradesmen and gentry inventories which suggest a similar problem. But for the yeoman, husbandman or cottager, debt and credit appears to have been much more localised, and therefore known about and included in inventories. The Brancepeth inventories therefore could provide a realistic figure for the final assets of the estate.

One of the Brancepeth inventories was too decayed to produce a final balance. Of the 185 remaining inventories which survive from Brancepeth dated between 1600 and 1699, only three produced a negative balance, where assets were insufficient to offset debts. The highest negative balance of £34 was that of Roland Wall of Willington, whose death occurred in 1644, when the finances of other people were severely strained as a result of the presence of both armies in Durham during the Civil War.[28] The other sizeable debt of £26, attributed to

[28] DUASC Will of Richard Whitfield, 1643, Alderman Draper of Durham. The Codicil to the will mentioned 'the distractions of the times, whereby a great part of his estate was alreadie waisted and likely to be waisted'.

William Trotter, appeared to have been connected to his estate management work for a Mrs Pilkington.[29]

Although only three inventories ended up with a deficit, there were many people whose goods and credits amounted to next to nothing. As can be seen in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2, ninety-one (forty-nine per cent) were balanced at less than £50. Of these, eighteen inventories added up to between one and ten pounds and a further twenty-one inventories amounted to £10 - £20; forty-nine were valued between £20 and £50. Nearly fifty per cent of the Brancepeth inventories were therefore valued at under £50. One inventory brought the top of this wealth pyramid to over £1,000, but there were only eleven inventories in total over the value of £350. In comparison to the figures derived from Gwyneth Nair's study of Highley, as shown for comparison on Table 3.1, the Brancepeth inventories were generally of lower value.[30]

The balances of inventories (including debts and credits) were used to produce Figure 3.3. The balances have been rounded down to whole pounds, excluding the shillings and pence. The values of the inventories, including those which could not be matched to the Family Reconstitution, are ranked from highest to lowest. Figure 3.3 shows that a very large proportion of the inventoried population were far from prosperous.

Figure 3.4 shows only the inventories which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution. A comparison of Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 suggests that the inventories which could be matched to the Family

[29] DUASC, Inventory of William Trotter, Helmington Row, 1625.

[30] G. Nair, Highley: The Development of a Community 1550-1880, (Oxford, 1988), p. 89.

Table 3.1 The balances of 185 probate inventories surviving from Brancepeth, 1600-1699, compared to Highley probate inventories, 1666-1740

	BRANCEPETH		HIGHLEY	
Value of inventory	No. of inventories	% of inventories	No. of inventories	% of inventories
Over £200	33	18%	6	35%
£100 - £199	36	19%	1	6%
£50 - £99	25	14%	5	29%
Less than £50	91	49%	5	29%

Figures for Highley taken from G. Nair, Highley: The Development of a Community 1550-1880, (Oxford, 1988), p. 89.

Figure 3.2 The values of surviving inventories from Brancepeth 1600-99, (based on the balances of 185 inventories)

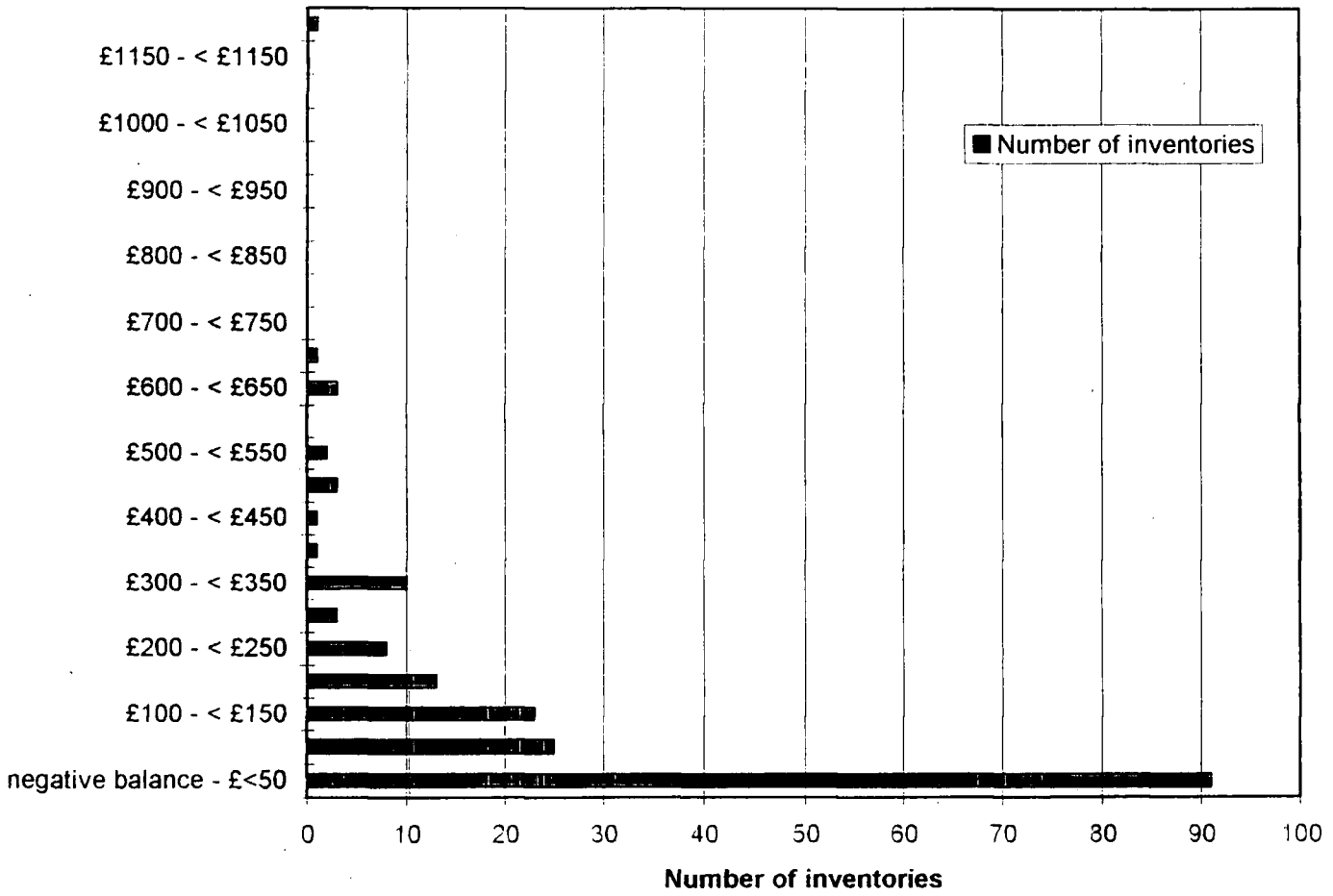


Figure 3.3 Brancepeth inventory balances ranked by value (based on 185 surviving inventories 1600-1699)

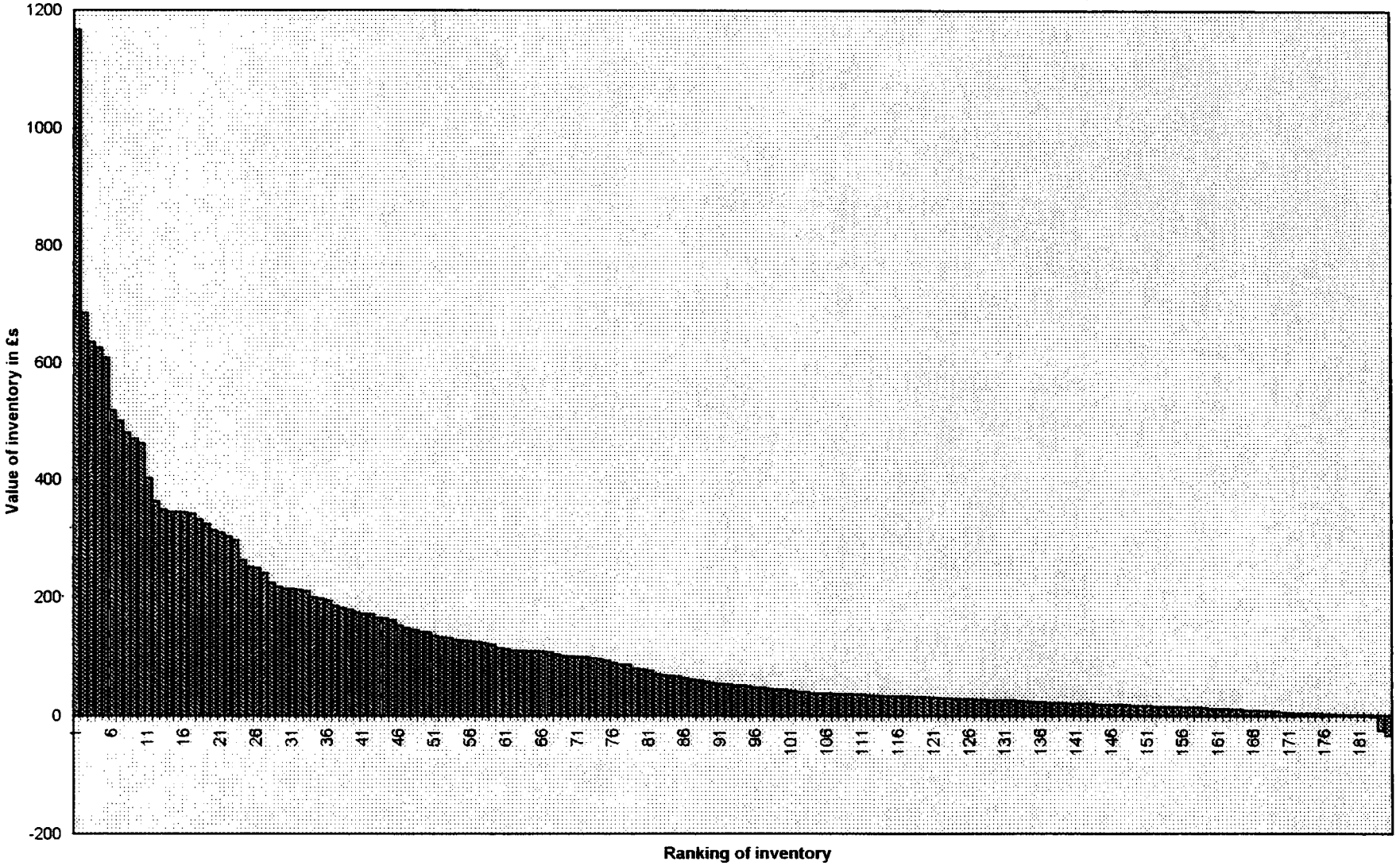
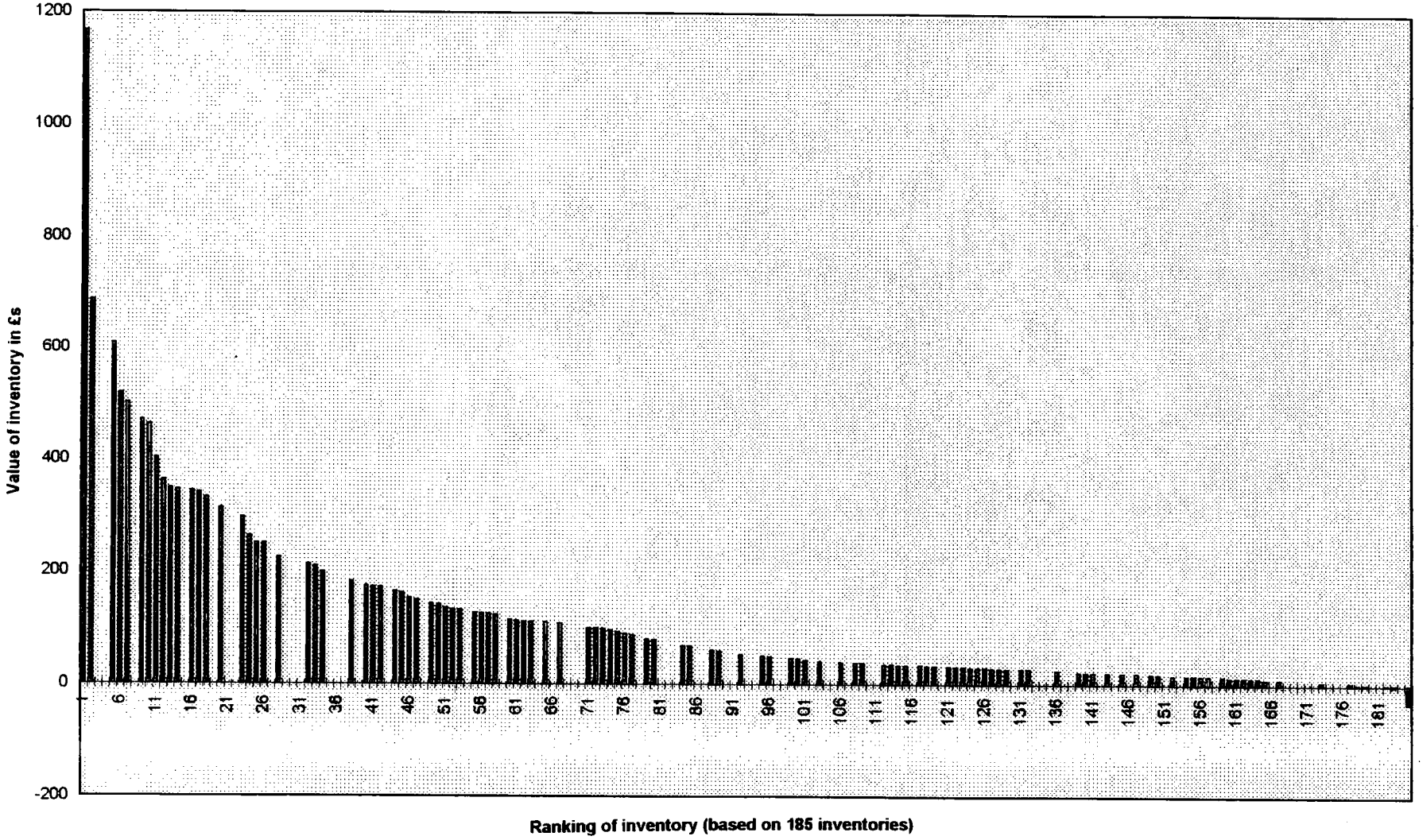


Figure 3.4 The Brancepeth inventories (1600-1699) which were traceable to the Family Reconstitution



Reconstitution are a representative sample of the inventories as a whole, although there are slightly fewer inventories around £200 in value, and £60 in value. The Family Reconstitution clearly represents people who were far from prosperous in Brancepeth.

Unfortunately, the 175 wills which have survived add little to the picture of wealth provided by the 186 inventories. There were only thirty-two additional wills from testators whose inventories had not survived. These wills were relatively easily matched to the Family Reconstitution using the date the will was made, the date of burial, the date the will was proved, and other information contained in the will. In total, eighty-four per cent of the 175 wills surviving could be matched to the Family Reconstitution or the spare burials. Some of those who were not traceable on the FRFs were people who had land outside Brancepeth, and may not have resided in the parish; one was a chapman selling salted fish, who happened to die while travelling through Brancepeth.[31] Usually the most useful indication of wealth or poverty in the wills was the size and quantity of the cash bequests. Normally these seemed appropriate to the value of the inventory, the age of the testator, and whether or not there were direct descendants. For the thirty-two wills with no accompanying inventory, sometimes cash bequests could be used to provide an indication of the wealth of the testator. Thomas Pickering of Brandon, for example, gave away over £500.[32]

The wills and inventories which survive from Brancepeth parish clearly represent individuals in a variety of financial circumstances. They are able to provide detailed evidence of the financial security which

[31] DUASC, Will of William Lassells, Chapman, Sojourner at Brancepeth, 1641.

[32] DUASC, Will of Thomas Pickering of Brandon, 1675.

different households experienced at a particular period in time. However, the experiences of widows and unmarried gentlemen demonstrate that the value of possessions could vary considerably during a person's life-time, and the snapshot of wealth or poverty revealed at the time of death may not be the best indicator of the status of individual family groups within the parish. Nevertheless, with other indicators of financial status of the inhabitants of Brancepeth, they may be able to provide corroborative evidence.

3.5 Brancepeth families and Brancepeth land

In a local study such as this, it is very desirable to be able to account for all the land within the parish boundaries, to know who owned it, and who was farming it, the type of tenancies, and the size of the holdings. This information can help to identify whether there were many people who could be described as wealthy influential parishioners. Although the sources on land tenure in Brancepeth are not fully comprehensive, there is enough information to identify most of the tenancies and to link these to the Family Reconstitution.

A number of surveys of the Brancepeth Lordship were undertaken after the attainder of the Earl of Westmorland, while the Lordship was in the hands of the Crown. The first, made in 1570, shows the tenants in each township, the date and terms of their leases, and the rent due. [33] Although the 1570 survey distinguishes cottagers from tenants with larger holdings, the survey does not detail the quantity of land each tenant farmed, or the value of the land. However, the 1607 survey, drawn up by

[33] PRO, E164/37, Survey of Brancepeth, 1570.

Thomas Chaytor, Thomas Johnson and Aaron Rathborne provides more detail.[34]

One of the surveyors, Thomas Chaytor, lived nearby at Butterby, in the adjacent parish of St. Oswald, and would therefore have known Brancepeth very well. In the 1607 survey, the value, the rent payable and the tenancy was normally detailed, showing the number of acres and roods in each field, whether the land was meadow, arable or pasture, or closes, and numbers of pasture gates (stints) on common land. There are few pieces of missing information on this survey. Basic details of the fee farm tenancies and some freeholders who held land in the parish are also included. The fee farm tenancies were not valued on the 1607 survey, although the more substantial rents payable were shown. Fee farming was one of the policies promoted on the Crown estates at the beginning of the seventeenth-century. The land was sold to the tenants, but the original owner kept a reasonable income by charging fee farm rents.[35] Most of the fee farm tenancies in Brancepeth were in Tudhoe. The fee farms in Tudhoe can be traced back to leaseholds shown on the 1570 survey.[36] In Tudhoe, the fee farm rents paid were the same as the rents paid on the old leases.

The 1607 survey was copied and partially updated circa 1620.[37] The details of the holdings appear to be a direct copy of the 1607 survey,

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[34] PRO, LR2/192, Survey of Brancepeth, 1607.

[35] R. Hoyle, ' "Shearing the Hog": the reform of the estates c. 1598-1640', in R. Hoyle (ed.), The Estates of the English Crown 1558-1640, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 232.

[36] PRO, E164/37.

[37] CLRO, Royal Contract Estates, RCE Rentals 5.6, Survey of Brancepeth (undated) circa 1620. The front page of the survey is badly damaged; the part of the page where the date would have been is now missing. Internal evidence from the document, and from the changes of the tenants names indicate that it was created between 1618 and 1621.

with occasional name changes for the tenants, and a small number of other minor changes. The rents and values are the same as the 1607 survey, despite other evidence to show that these had been altered by the estate steward Thomas Emerson's negotiation of new leases in the years preceding 1620.[38] This survey is therefore not a very reliable record of the acreage of each tenancy, which may also have undergone some changes in a period of about fourteen years.

The 1629 survey provides summary information about the leases in existence, after Thomas Emerson and Henry Vane's attempts to increase the revenues of the lordship.[39] The survey distinguishes between cottagers and larger tenancies, details pasture gates (stints), the reserved rents, increased rents, yearly value of the tenancy, and the date and terms of the lease. Sample cross checks between the 1607 survey and the 1629 survey show that in three cases where the tenancy had not been renewed since 1607, the reserved rent was approximately the rent which was payable in 1607, but the yearly value was not an exact copy of the value in 1607.[40] Increased rents were shown against many of the tenancies which had been renewed; these were in the region of double the old rents; the value of the tenancies was also changed. The 1629 survey indicates that re-negotiations of the terms of the tenants' leases initiated by Thomas Emerson, steward until 1623, which were continued by the next royal steward, Henry Vane, had resulted in higher rents and new valuations of the tenancies. Because the 1629 survey did not name or measure the individual pieces of land in the tenancy, and because the

[38] Duchy of Cornwall Archives, S/M/5, Book of Compositions, 1617, 1618, 1624.

[39] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4; DCA, S/M/5; PRO, LR2/214, Henry Vane's notes of fines and rents 1617-22.

[40] See CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4, entries for Ralph Morrison of Stockley, Ralph Douthwaite of Willington, Lancelot Fetherstone of Stanley.

value and the rents had changed, it is difficult to match the survey directly to the 1607 tenancies. The survey is also of limited use because it does not show fee farm or freehold tenancies. It was therefore decided that the 1607 survey was the most useful basis for reconstructing the size and value of the leasehold tenancies.

Separate from the Lordship of Brancepeth, was the Rectory Manor of Brancepeth, part of the advowson of Brancepeth, which was a group of farms and cottages on rectory land. Thomas Emerson, steward of the Brancepeth Lordship, named the tenants of the Rectory Manor in the enquiry of 1614.[41] A Rectory Manor court book has survived, dating from 1695.[42] This document clearly shows that the land was held by copyhold from the rector of Brancepeth.

Property deeds, where available, can provide information on some of the freehold estates. The Brancepeth estate archives include over 2,000 property deeds, approximately 250 of which relate to properties in Brancepeth parish in the seventeenth century. After some initial sampling, it was decided that the Brancepeth Estate Catalogue contains all the significant details of each deed, making it unnecessary to consult most of the original deeds.[43] In addition to the property deeds in the Brancepeth Estate Catalogue, the Salvin papers also contain deeds for property in Tudhoe, and the Leybourne Deeds include properties in Brancepeth.[44] The catalogue entries, rather than the original deeds were used.

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[41] Emerson's comments in PRO, E/178/3765, Inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship, 1614.

[42] DDCL, Longstaff MSS, Vol. 4. Brancepeth Rectory Court Book.

[43] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Archives Catalogue.

[44] DCRO, Salvin Papers Catalogue; DULASC Leybourne Deeds Catalogue.

Even with the abundance of deeds which have survived from Brancepeth, the collection is incomplete. Once property became freehold, deeds could easily get mixed up in other family papers or solicitors' papers, and could be destroyed.[45] The available deeds are fortunate survivors, and can only provide a partial picture of what was happening to the properties within the parish. Because of the uneven survival of property deeds, they cannot be used to provide a comprehensive survey of the size and value of the tenancies in Brancepeth at different periods of the seventeenth century. They can however, provide useful information on some individual properties.

A Book of Rates, dated 1615, provides a rateable value for the principal properties within each parish in Durham.[46] Although the rateable values in Books of Rates are believed to be historic rather than accurate valuations,[47] the entries in the 1615 edition for Brancepeth at least suggest which were the sizeable estates of the parish, including freeholders. A 1688 edition of the Book of Rates has also survived.[48] This is less useful as an indicator of the comparative value of the larger estates, because it lumps together smaller properties under named individuals, who were probably the ones held responsible for collecting the dues from them.

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[45] A few small additional collections of deeds have found their way to Durham Record Office, and are included in the small deposits miscellaneous catalogue. DCRO, Miscellaneous Catalogue.

[46] DDC, Hunter MSS, Vol. 22, item 1, Book of Rates 1615.

[47] M. Turner, 'The Land Tax, Land, and Property: Old Debates and New Horizons' in M. Turner and D. Mills, (eds.), Land and Property: The English Land Tax 1692-1832, (Sutton, 1986), p. 3.

[48] DCRO, D/Sa/X5, Book of Rates, 1688.

The 1630s tithe book is perhaps the most comprehensive source on all the property within the parish, (except Tudhoe, where tithes were collected and paid over by one resident).[49] Because tithe was due on all the land within the parish, and because the rector, John Cosin, was a meticulous record keeper, the listing of tenancies in the tithe book is likely to be more or less fully comprehensive, providing the names and addresses of each household farming in the parish (with the exception of Tudhoe), even down to the level of poor widows and people whom Cosin described as beggars. However, the document cannot be used to compare size or values of tenancies. The only indication of the size or value of the holdings are the tithes which were paid. Some were paid in kind; in fleeces, lambs, calves etc. Others were commuted to cash sums. Many parishioners appear not to have paid their tithes at all in some years, and payments may be carried over from year to year where holdings were not large enough to warrant paying over whole lambs each year. It is therefore difficult to use the tithe book to make comparisons about the wealth of individual families. However, the tithe book is very useful to track down the larger freehold properties in the parish. It is also extremely useful as a record of who actually farmed each holding, especially where it is suspected from the Family Reconstitution, that the actual tenant or owner did not live in the parish.

The omission of a list of Tudhoe households in the tithe book is balanced by the survival of the Tudhoe enclosure papers, dated 1639.[50] The voluntary enclosure agreement which was drawn up itemised the amounts of land held by the tenants in each of the town fields. Although there were probably other sub-tenants and tenants of outlying land who

[49] DCRO, D/Br/E77.

[50] DCRO, D/Sa/E 571-3.

were not included in this list, the records provide very valuable evidence of the amounts of land held by different families in 1639, almost concurrent with the Brancepeth tithe book.

These sources, collectively, can provide details of the type of land tenure, and the size and relative value of most of the properties held by families living in the parish. By analysing this evidence, it is possible to make an assessment of whether the neighbours of Brancepeth were in similar kinds of circumstances, farming similar amounts of land, or whether there were parishioners who were clearly in a different league, who had not been fully represented in the survey of probate records.

The starting point is the 1607 survey. This survey shows that the valuation of each tenancy was always much higher than the rents being paid per annum. Cottagers such as John Jackson and William Mason whose rent was 12d. per year for a cottage without land, had their tenancies valued at 2s. 6d. Robert Arkle, who worked sixteen acres and one rood of land at Brandon, had to pay 14s. 1d. per year in rent, for his tenancy which was valued at £4. 9s. 4d. The survey also shows the date and length of the lease for most tenants. The majority of the leases were for twenty-one years; some were for longer periods of time, and others were for three lives.

In addition to the rents, the tenants had to pay fines at the renewal of their leases. There is no surviving information about the fines paid when the leases were taken out which were in force when the survey of 1607 was made, but the new leases offered when Emerson and Vane were stewards of the lordship involved the tenants in hefty up-front payments of fines.[51] Rents paid are not shown as directly proportional to

[51] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.4.

the value of the tenancy; the hidden cost of the tenancies was no doubt, the fine which was paid each time the lease was renewed, based on the value of the tenancy, the length of lease, and the rent due. The valuation of the tenancy, as surveyed in 1607, is therefore a more accurate measure of the wealth and status of the tenants than the rent paid, or the amount of land held. Although the survey details the acreage of land which each tenancy included, only a seventeenth century surveyor or parishioner could know whether four acres of arable in 'the westfield' in Tudhoe was as valuable as five acres of meadow at 'Burnemouth' in Willington.

Table 3.2 shows a breakdown of the values of land held. Apart from one lease of 930 acres at Waterhouse, which was worth £151, the rest of the leases were worth less than £80, and more than half the leases were worth less than £10. Table 3.2 compares the figures for all the leaseholds with those which could be matched to Family Reconstitution households. The Family Reconstitution leaseholders did not have higher value leases than the leaseholders in general.

Categorising the value of leases is, however, more straightforward than assessing the value of a particular leaseholder's land. One person may have several leases within the same lordship, or even freehold, fee farm or copyhold land within the parish as well as leasehold land. Occasionally, where leases were in the same township, the surveyors in 1607 sometimes made it clear by listing their leases one after the other, and indicating that they were held by the same person. Where this was clearly the case, the values of these leases have already been combined in Table 3.2. Where leases were held in different townships, it was impractical for the surveyors to indicate that the person already held a

Table 3.2 The values of the Brancepeth leaseholds, 1607

Values of leases (rounded up or down to nearest £1)	All leases		Leases matched to Family Reconstitution	
	number	% of all leases	number	% of matched leases
£ 1	71	39%	43	41%
£2	8		5	
£3	14	23%	9	21%
£4	8		1	
£5	13		7	
£6	18		12	
£7	8	22%	5	24%
£8	7		3	
£9	7		5	
£10	3		3	
£11	2		1	
£12	5		2	
£13	1		0	
£14	0	9%	0	10%
£15	1		1	
£16	1		1	
£17	3		1	
£18	0		0	
£19	1		1	
£20 - £29	7	4%	5	5%
£30 - £39	1	0.5%	0	0%
£40 - £49	0	0%	0	0%
£50 - £99	3	2%	0	0%
Over £100	1	0.5%	0	0%
TOTALS	183		105	

lease elsewhere in the parish. It was also probably impractical to personally farm land miles apart, and where two tenancies, each with houses, fell into the hands of one person, one of the tenancies was very likely to have been sub-let.

Fortunately there are only 29 duplicated names amongst the 227 named leaseholders, fee farmers and freeholders detailed on the 1607 survey. Some of these people are very likely to be the same person. However, in other circumstances, it is a matter for historical judgement, based on whether or not the first and second names were common in the parish, and whether there are one or more household heads who share that name on the Family Reconstitution at that date.

Fifty-seven per cent of leases (105 of 183) could be matched to the Family Reconstitution. A further forty-two could be matched to the spare burials, leaving only twenty per cent of leases unmatched. Table 3.2 shows that the leaseholders which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution were typical of the leaseholders in general. Table 3.2 by inference, also shows that a number of leaseholders did not live in the parish, or else failed to contribute enough baptisms, marriages or burials to the parish registers to generate a FRF. For example, there was no evidence that John Trollop, the lessee of the 930 acres at Waterhouse, actually lived there. He was very likely a member of the recusant Trollop family of Thornley in Durham, a conformist member who was willing to be involved in complicated legal transactions in order to hold land for recusant families such as the Claxtons, who appear as the lessees of Waterhouse in the 1570 survey and also in the update of the 1607 survey of Brancepeth which was made circa 1620.[52] Leases of 100 acres in

[52] PRO, E164/37 p. 309; CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.6.

Ivesley, and 122 acres 2 roods in East Brandon, valued at £58. 13s. 4d. and £72 respectively, were both held by Sir Brian Bellasis, who does not appear on the Family Reconstitution, probably because he resided on the family's main estate elsewhere. Timothy Whittingham held 290 acres in West Brandon, valued at £57, but no doubt lived at the family's main estate of Holmeside, in nearby Lanchester parish. Henry Sanderson was living at West Brandon in 1614.[53] By the time the survey was updated circa 1620, Sanderson had become the official tenant of West Brandon, and Whittingham's connection with the parish appears to have been over.[54]

The highest value lease in 1607 which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution was that of William Conyers, the bailiff of the Brancepeth Lordship, who had fifty-nine acres of land, valued at £27. 4s. 4d., and who was normally accorded the title of 'Mr' in parish records. Close to the value of William Conyers' lease was the fifty-one acres one rood of land leased by Nicholas Pickering of Crook and Billy Row township, valued at £25. 12s. At the other end of the scale, George Colson of Stockley was leasing a cottage, barn and garth, valued at 2s. 6d., and paying eight pence per year in rent, and Ralph Gowland had the lease of a cottage at Willington with no land, valued at two shillings, paying four pence per year in rent. The Family Reconstitution therefore represents families who held leases which ranged from about £30 down to the leases valued at around two shillings. Only at the very top of this scale could the leaseholders be regarded as approaching gentry status, such as

[53] DCRO, D/Gr/354, Copy of inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship, 1614.

[54] CLRO, RCE Rentals 5.6.

William Conyers, although fifty-nine acres would barely qualify for yeomanry status in Cambridgeshire in the 1660s.[55]

Table 3.3 shows a breakdown of the quantities of leases of different sizes, and the proportion which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution. Forty-five per cent of leases which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution were less than four acres. Cottagers would have found difficulty feeding a family on the produce from such small amounts of land, especially as much of the land was not of particularly good quality in Brancepeth parish. The average size of the leasehold tenancies which matched with the Family Reconstitution was only thirteen and a half acres; the median was even lower, at nine acres. Table 3.3 shows that the Brancepeth residents who were leaseholders were almost all of husbandmen and cottager status, although most of them would have referred to themselves as yeoman (using the word in its northern context).[56] The leaseholders which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution were not better-off than the rest of the leaseholders.

On the 1607 survey there were three intakes which were not valued, paying low rents, twenty-one fee farm tenancies, paying rents in the region of 4s. 6d. to £10, and nineteen freeholds, where rents were nil or of low, peppercorn values, and which give no indication of the size of the estates. Only forty-three per cent of these tenancies could be traced to the Family Reconstitution.

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[55] M. Spufford, Contrasting Communities, (Cambridge, 1974) p. 38.

[56] Yeoman is used to describe men with small amounts of land in Northumberland and Durham, see D. Cressy, 'Social Status and Literacy in North East England, 1560-1630', Local Population Studies No. 21, (1978), p. 22. There are also associations with border service, see J. McDonnell, 'Antecedents of Border Tenant Right', Northern History, Vol. 30, (1994), pp. 29-30.

Table 3.3 The size of all the Brancepeth leaseholds compared with those which could be matched to the Family Reconstitution, 1607

Amount of land	Numer of leaseholds	%	Number of leaseholds matched to Family Reconstitution	% of matched leaseholds
No land	37		19	
Less than 1 acre	16		11	
1 to less than 2 acres	12	40%	10	45%
2 to less than 3 acres	3		2	
3 to less than 4 acres	6		5	
4 to less than 5 acres	3		2	
5 to less than 6 acres	3		0	
6 to less than 7 acres	1	8%	1	6%
7 to less than 8 acres	4		1	
8 to less than 9 acres	3		2	
9 to less than 10 acres	4		2	
10 to less than 11 acres	3		2	
11 to less than 12 acres	3		2	
12 to less than 13 acres	2		0	
13 to less than 14 acres	8		5	
14 to less than 15 acres	8	24%	4	21%
15 to less than 16 acres	2		1	
16 to less than 17 acres	4		2	
17 to less than 18 acres	3		1	
18 to less than 19 acres	2		0	
19 to less than 20 acres	5		3	
20 to less than 30 acres	24	13%	14	13%
30 to less than 40 acres	11	6%	9	9%
40 to less than 50 acres	5	3%	3	3%
50 to less than 60 acres	4	2%	3	3%
Over 60 acres	7	4%	1	1%
TOTAL	183		105	

Most of the fee farm tenants were in Tudhoe.[57] Some suggestions of the sizes of the tenancies in Tudhoe can be gained from the enclosure agreement of 1639.[58] When the town fields of Tudhoe were enclosed in 1639, George Sidgswick, who paid a fee farm rent of 30s. 6d. in 1607, had just over fifty-three acres in the town fields of Tudhoe, and the Pembertons, who were paying a fee farm rent of £3. 13s. 2d. in 1607 had over eighty-two acres in 1639, although there is no evidence from the Family Reconstitution that the Pembertons resided in Tudhoe. Most of the Tudhoe fee farmers who could be traced to the Family Reconstitution were paying fee farm rents of between 5s. and £3 in 1607, and in 1639 land owned by people with the same surnames measured between five and eighty-one acres.

Other fee farmers included the Brabant family who lived at Page Bank, acting as wardens of the East Park of Brancepeth. There were also two fee farm tenancies in Stockley, paying rents of 8s. and £1.

The 1607 survey provides details of the size of some freehold tenancies; John Strangwaies held twelve acres freehold at Cockside House near Littleburn. Four freehold tenancies in Willington varied between fifteen acres two roods, and twenty-nine acres. In Tudhoe, the two freeholders had nine acres two roods and five acres two roods respectively. Unfortunately the 1607 survey does not provide acreage for the other freehold tenancies. The Hinde family of Brandon had 121 acres in 1602.[59] The Littleburn estate consisted of 350 acres in 1703.[60]

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[57] The fee-farmers of Tudhoe had briefly been tenants of the Earl of Cumberland between 1570 and 1607, see PRO, LR2/192 and DCRO, Salvin Papers Catalogue, ref. D616-9.

[58] DCRO, D/Sa/E571-3, Tudhoe enclosure, 1639.

[59] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue ref. D811-12.

[60] DULASC, Leybourne Deeds Catalogue.

Freeholds at Unthank, Langley, Scouthouse, Billy Hall, Burnigill, Brandon, Stockley, and Lady Adeline Neville's land in Willington are also listed on the 1607 survey, but without acreage. In addition, there was another freehold estate in the parish; the manor of Holywell, not mentioned in the 1607 survey. Holywell was held by the Freville family at the beginning of the seventeenth century; it was sold in 1623 for £770, and by 1629 it was in the hands of the Swinburne family.[61]

The 1615 Book of Rates gives some suggestions as to the relative value of the larger estates in the parish. Littleburn, Willington and Cockside House were rated at between £4 and £6, while Holywell, and Langley were rated at £9 and £10 respectively. Burnigill and Helmington Row were each rated at £13. 6s. 8d. East Brandon was rated at £20 and Stanley and Billy Hall, together, were rated at £27. In comparison, Waterhouse was rated at £8.[62]

The tithe book, drawn up by John Cosin in 1630, also provides some indications of the relative value of some of the freehold estates not detailed on the 1607 survey of Brancepeth. [63] Littleburn yielded ten fleeces, three lambs, a calf and 20s. in hay and corn tithe in 1630. Willington Hall paid £5. 10s.; Cockside House yielded two fleeces and one lamb, and £4. 10s. in cash in 1630. Holywell paid £9. Two of Langley's tenants paid £3 and £2. 10s. respectively. Two of Burnigill's tenants paid £3. 7s and £1. 5s. 4d. in 1630. Helmington Row yielded £4 and £1. 13s. 4d from two tenants. Brandon Hall at East Brandon yielded

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[61] DULASC, Leybourne Deeds Catalogue.

[62] DDCL, Hunter MSS, Vol. 22, item 1.

[63] DCRO, D/Br E77.

one fleece, one lamb, £1. 5s. 4d. for hay, corn, and calves. Stanley's tenants paid thirty-three fleeces, eleven lambs, a calf and 12s. in 1630, and Billy Hall yielded ten fleeces, two lambs, half a calf and 3s. 4d. in 1630. Although not directly proportionate to the 1615 Book of Rates, the tithes paid in 1630 broadly echo the rates payable by the different estates of the parish. In 1634 the Rector, John Cosin, agreed with Mr Claxton the chief tenant, to accept £3 per year for all the tithes from Waterhouse, except for two tenancies. Waterhouse was a leasehold estate of 930 acres in 1607, rated at £8 in 1615.

The tithe book also confirms that many of the freehold properties were not farmed by their owners. The Calverley family seem to be the only freeholding family of high status who farmed their own estate, and who appeared frequently enough in the Family Reconstitution to have lived in the parish on a long-term basis. Sir Thomas Calverley who died in 1613 was temporal chancellor of the Palatine of Durham. His son Sir John, who died in 1638 was a Justice of Assize in Durham.[64] The Levers, descended from the puritan preacher Thomas Lever, owned Scout House, and Henry Lever, grandson of the more famous Thomas Lever, briefly acted as minister of Brancepeth during the interregnum. However, the tithe book shows that Scout House was sub-let in the 1630s. Robert Lever, nephew to Henry, was the first Lever to have a child buried in Brancepeth, in 1674. This is the only entry in the parish register for the Lever family, suggesting that the Lever family may not have lived at Scout House for any length of time. It is therefore possible to conclude that there was no sizeable group of high-status freeholders resident in Brancepeth, at least in the early years of the seventeenth century.

[64] Brancepeth Church, (damaged in church fire of 1998), Grave cover of Sir John Calverley (died 1638); C. M. Fraser and K. Emsley (eds.), Durham Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1471-1625, Surtees Society Vol. 199, (1991), p. 339.

Other gentry families appear at different times in the parish registers. As they do not appear on the 1607 survey, they may have been sub-tenants or purchasers of leases or freeholds from the absentee owners or leaseholders of some of the better houses of the parish. Few seemed to pay more than a fleeting visit of a few years in the parish, before the houses were re-let or sold. None of these temporary residents could be described as upper gentry.

According to testimony of Thomas Emerson, the estate steward of the Lordship of Brancepeth, there was no copyhold land in the lordship in 1614.[65] The small amount of copyhold land within the parish of Brancepeth was within the Rectory Manor of Brancepeth, which appears to have been land and cottages in and around Brancepeth village. Emerson could name the Rectory Manor tenants, but stated that 'the quantity, quallitie and valewe of their tenements, wee cannot be enformed', not being within the Brancepeth Lordship. He named eight tenants.[66] Six of the eight surnames can be matched to tenants in Brancepeth village, each described in the 1630s tithe book as a 'parsons farmer' or 'Parsons cottager', and shown with a rent charge.[67] The 1630s tithe book shows 10 tenants as parson's farmers, and also lists the rents which they were due to pay. These ranged from the 6d. paid by M. Hedley, described in the tithe book as a parson's cottager and a weaver, to the 10s. paid by William Douthwaite described as a parson's farmer and husbandman. The Rectory Manor court book shows nine tenants admitted to tenancies by their new rector in 1695. In 1699 and 1700 seven

[65] PRO, E/178/3765.

[66] PRO, E/178/3765.

[67] DCRO, D/Br/E77; Brancepeth Estate Catalogue ref. D436-7, D475 which mention properties which were previously part of the Rectory Manor.

tenants are recorded as paying rents which range from 1s per year to 14s. 5d. per year.[68] Only one surname matches between the tenants of 1614 and those of 1695; the Arrowsmith family, who paid 5s. 3d. rent in 1614, and were still paying the same amount in 1695. Although the 1695 court book does not show the actual size of all the tenancies, the descriptions of them suggest that they were small; cottages with gardens, small pieces of land, and a divided house. This fits with the picture of the parson's farmers and cottagers described in the 1630s tithe book as including spurriers, joiners, weavers, labourers, a husbandman and a beggar.

Six of the eight tenants of the Rectory Manor listed by Emerson in 1614 could be matched to the Family Reconstitution. Five of the ten tenants admitted in the 1695 Rectory Manor court book could be matched to the Family Reconstitution, and of the seven tenants listed as paying rent to the Rectory Manor in 1699-1700, four were traceable to the Family Reconstitution. These small copyhold farms, cottages and small pieces of land, were largely occupied by people who lived in Brancepeth long enough to appear on the Family Reconstitution.

Having completed this investigation of the types of tenure and size of holdings in the parish of Brancepeth, and having linked these tenants to the Family Reconstitution, it is possible to make some general conclusions about the residents of Brancepeth parish. There were very few people who could be described as resident gentry; only the Calverley family, the Brabants, and the Claxtons would undoubtedly qualify for this description. There were a small number of others who could qualify for the title of Mr; younger branches of the Fetherstonehalgh family and the Lever family, who resided in the parish in the later seventeenth century, the

[68] DDCL, Longstaff MSS, Vol. 4.

estate steward Thomas Emerson, and the constable of the castle, Henry Sanderson. Below this level, William Conyers, the estate Bailiff was normally given the title of Mr, and by the late seventeenth century, Thomas Hull of Stockley was also termed gentlemen. Other lower gentry families resided temporarily in the parish. However, men who were accorded the title of gentleman in Brancepeth were not necessarily as wealthy as those classed as gentlemen in other parts of the country. In Myddle the gentry families held land ranging from 100 - 650 acres; in Cambridgeshire, yeomen could be farming up to 200 acres.[69] In Brancepeth there were very few resident families farming more than 100 acres of land; probably only the Claxtons at Waterhouse, the Calverleys at Littleburn, the Wortleys at Langley and Unthank, and the Hedworths of Brandon.

The vast majority of the non-gentry residents of Brancepeth parish were leaseholders; a small number were fee-farmers, copyholders and freeholders. These people were farming small amounts of land. All the resident tenants whose land could be measured were farming under ninety acres, and most appear to have been farming land which was below thirty acres in size. None of the leaseholders who could be traced to the Family Reconstitution had as much land as the median of ninety-two acres farmed by Spufford's yeomen of Cambridgeshire.[70] Only twenty (less than one fifth) of the Brancepeth leaseholders traceable to the Family Reconstitution held between twenty-one and forty acres, the range for husbandmen found by Spufford in Cambridgeshire. However, forty-six (forty-five per cent) of the 105 Brancepeth leaseholders who appeared on the Family Reconstitution had less than four acres of land. Forty-two of

[69] D. Hey, Family and Local History in England, (London, 1987), p. 93; Spufford, Contrasting Communities, (Cambridge, 1974), p. 38.

[70] Spufford, Contrasting Communities, p. 38.

these tenants had less than three acres, and nineteen of these households had no land of their own. In addition to the leaseholders there were also copyhold cottagers living on Rectory Manor land and fee farmers in Tudhoe with less than ten acres.

The evidence of the surveys, deeds, rate books, manorial records and the tithe book fit well with the picture provided by the probate inventories. Most of the Brancepeth tenants who are traceable to the Family Reconstitution appear to have lived rather close to the brink of poverty, if not on the brink. Family Reconstitution identifies the more geographically stable residents of a parish, who tend to be more secure in their tenancies, and are usually therefore better-off than many of the transient families who are unable to obtain this status in a parish. In Brancepeth, it is significant that the stable, reconstitutable, population were farming such small amounts of land. Hardly any of the tenants could be considered to have the financial status of yeomen in other parts of the country, and the parish was also devoid of a resident group of gentry. In Myddle, the gentry group held twelve farms between them.[71] In Brancepeth, the resident gentry families were less than half this number, even though the population was nearly three times the size of Myddle.[72] Unlike Terling in Essex,[73] Brancepeth parish was not dominated by a group of substantial yeoman farmers; this kind of group, as well as gentry, were largely absent from Brancepeth. This makes Brancepeth an interesting place for a study of social networks, because social relationships could not be conducted within a clearly hierarchical social structure based on wealth and status.

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[71] Hey, Family and Local History in England, p. 93.

[72] Hey, Myddle, p. 42.

[73] K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village, (Oxford, 1995), p. 28.

3.6 Examining poverty levels in Brancepeth - linking the Hearth Tax to the Family Reconstitution

The Hearth Tax records can be used to make a basic assessment of wealth and poverty.[74] The number of larger houses, with two hearths and above, can act as one indicator of wealth. The proportion of the households which were exempt from the tax provides another easily accessible measure of poverty. In Brancepeth, the analysis of the Hearth Tax is based on the Michaelmas 1665 assessments combined with forty-nine additional households from the Lady Day 1666 assessments, for the reasons outlined in chapter two.[75]

As we have already seen in chapter two, Table 2.1, Brancepeth had few houses with more than one hearth. Seventy-one per cent of the households lived in one-hearth homes. There were only nineteen homes in the whole parish of 342 households which had four hearths or more. Although this could be partly a northern preference for traditional domestic living, centred round one hearth, it may also be an indication of small cottages and houses, unmodernised through lack of resources.[76] The second explanation matches well with the shortage of luxury goods in many inventories discussed in chapter two, and the numbers of tenants who were farming very small amounts of land, as shown in the previous section of this chapter.

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[74] See Mitson, 'Kinship', pp. 30-33; Hey, Myddle, p. 52; K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525-1700, (Oxford, 1995) p. 34; D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham 1560-1765, (Oxford, 1991), p. 155-7.

[75] PRO, E179/245/27, Hearth Tax Assessments 1665; E179/106/28, Hearth Tax Assessments 1666.

[76] See C. Husbands, 'Hearths, Wealth and Occupations', in T. Arkell and K. Schurer, (eds.), Surveying the People, (Oxford, 1992) p. 68-9.

Out of the 342 households in Brancepeth 138 (forty per cent) were listed as exempt from the Hearth Tax. This proportion is higher than the thirty per cent of exempt which seems to be about normal for rural communities.[77] However, compared to the coal mining parishes of Chester-le-Street and Whickham, where the percentages of exempt reached seventy-eight per cent,[78] the problems of poverty do not appear to be abnormally great in Brancepeth parish, at least by the time the 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessments were made.

The Hearth Tax assessments also give a useful guide to the distribution of the exempt within the parish. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of taxable to non-taxable households in different parts of the parish. Only the townships of Crook and Billy Row and Brandon and Byshottles show below average numbers of exempt households. The households which were exempt from the tax were not concentrated in one area of the parish, they were present in sizeable numbers in each township. By cross-checking the households with the Family Reconstitution, it should be possible to discover whether the exempt households were mainly those of the transient poor.

Of the 342 households shown on the 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax Assessments, 238 (seventy per cent) could be matched to the Family Reconstitution. In addition, two households were found on the spare burials file. Of the remaining householders, many had familiar Brancepeth surnames, but they could not be identified with certainty, perhaps because they were widows, single household heads, or childless. Only eleven per

[77] K. Wrightson, English Society, (London, 1982), p. 148.

[78] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, p.156.

Table 3.4 Chargeable and exempt households shown on the 1665 Hearth Tax with additional households from the 1666 Hearth Tax

TOWNSHIP	CHARGEABLE HOUSEHOLDS		EXEMPT HOUSEHOLDS	
Brancepeth	49	(52%)	45	(48%)
Brandon and Byshottles	46	(78%)	13	(22%)
Crook and Billy Row	16	(89%)	2	(11%)
Helmington Row	17	(57%)	13	(43%)
Stockley	25	(53%)	22	(47%)
Tudhoe	32	(58%)	23	(42%)
Willington	19	(49%)	20	(51%)
TOTAL	204	(60%)	138	(40%)

cent of surnames on the Hearth Tax for 1665 (plus the 1666 extras) could not be found on the Family Reconstitution or spare burials, and these included people who were traceable in other ways, such as the rector, Dr Daniel Brevint, and Colonel Steward, a scotsman who came to Brancepeth during the Civil War and married the widow of Sir John Calverley.[79]

It was important to find out whether there were considerable numbers of exempt households within the Family Reconstitution population. Of those who were liable to pay the Hearth Tax, 148 (seventy-three per cent) were traceable on the Family Reconstitution. In comparison, 90 (sixty-five per cent) of the exempt were traceable on the Family Reconstitution. This suggests that even by the later part of the seventeenth century, the Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth continues to represent those who were poor, as well as families who may not have been far from poverty.

Of the seventeen liable households which did not have Brancepeth surnames, several were larger households, with four hearths and over. Their owners were still liable to pay the tax, even if they resided elsewhere.[80] The Hearth Tax evidence therefore suggests that even as late as 1665-6, there appears to have been a dearth of resident gentry families in the parish.

The eleven exempt householders who could not be matched to the Family Reconstitution and whose surnames were unfamiliar in the parish,

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[79] R. Welford, (ed.), Records of the Committees for Compounding etc. 1643-1660, Surtees Society, Vol. 111, (1905), p. 346-7.

[80] T. Arkell & K. Schurer, 'Introducing the documents' and T. Arkell, 'Printed Instructions for Administering the Hearth Tax', in K. Schurer and T. Arkell (eds.), Surveying the People, (Oxford, 1992), p. 31.

(eight per cent of the exempt households) were probably the transient poor. However, the vast majority of the exempt households in Brancepeth can be traced to the stable, reconstitutable population. An analysis of these ninety exempt households who could be matched to the Family Reconstitution can therefore aid our understanding of the circumstances of these households who were allowed exemption in Brancepeth.[81]

Twenty-seven percent of these households had a female head; most were widows. The remaining seventy-three per cent were headed by men. The actual ages could be calculated in thirty-two cases where the Family Reconstitution record showed the baptismal date of the household head. The approximate ages of the exempt household heads could be estimated from the Family Reconstitution in a further fifty-five cases. Where the baptismal date was not available, it was possible to estimate the age of the household head based on how long ago the individuals had been married. Some individuals were married in the parish during the period of reconstitution; others had married before they appeared in the Family Reconstitution. Using the Family Reconstitution, it was possible to calculate the age at first marriage for twelve of the individuals.[82] These ages ranged from twenty to fifty-four, and averaged at thirty, the kind of age which could be expected, based on Family Reconstitution studies elsewhere.[83] Thirty years were therefore added to the length of time since the remaining fifty-five household heads were first known to be married in

[81] See W. Newman Brown, 'The receipt of poor relief and family situation: Aldenham, Hertfordshire 1630-90', in R. M. Smith, (ed.), Land, Kinship and Life Cycle, (Cambridge, 1984), and L. Botelho, 'Aged and impotent: parish relief of the aged poor in early modern Suffolk', in M. Daunton (ed.), Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past, (London, 1996), for similar methods.

[82] Some of these age calculations could be affected by the 'start up' problems of Family Reconstitution outlined earlier in this chapter.

[83] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541-1871, (Cambridge, 1989), p. 255.

order to estimate their ages. The actual and estimated ages can be seen in Table 3.5. The twenty-four women were estimated to be aged between forty-two and eighty, with more than half aged over sixty. The men were estimated to be aged between twenty-seven and seventy-five, however, only seventeen percent of these men were estimated to be over sixty. The Family Reconstitution revealed that some of the younger men had six and seven children living, all aged under seventeen. Having too many young children to provide for was often used as a reason for poverty by the poor tradesmen of Durham City, when applying for help from the Henry Smith charity.[84]

There are no surviving overseers of the poor accounts for this period, except for Tudhoe township. Five of the ten men from Tudhoe can be traced in the Tudhoe overseers accounts; Ambrose Bell, aged about 52 in 1665, was given 1s. in 1670 by the overseers.[85] John Gill, Michael Hillery, and Henry Hillery received several payments of between 4d. and 2s. in 1670 and 1671.[86] Richard Browne received a payment of 1s. 6d. in 1670, and Thomas Browne received 6d. in 1671.[87] Only Michael Hillery was estimated to be aged over 60. Widow Peele, aged about 65 in 1665, also from Tudhoe, featured repeatedly in the records of the overseers; in 1670 and 1671 she received four payments, totalling 5s. 9d.[88] The overseers' accounts from Tudhoe are not bound, and the loose papers do not form a comprehensive sequence, making it impossible to tell how many years these people received relief. However, these few surviving

[84] DCRO, Du/6/3/1-3, Henry Smith Charity Petitions 1612, 1627-31.

[85] DCRO, D/Sa/E923, Tudhoe Overseers of the Poor Accounts, 1670.

[86] DCRO, D/Sa/E923.

[87] DCRO, D/Sa/E923.

[88] DCRO, D/Sa/E923.

Table 3.5 The estimated or actual ages of householders who were exempt from paying the Hearth Tax, and who could be traced on the Family Reconstitution (using the 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax combined)

Minimum age group	Men	Women
20-29 years	3	0
30 - 39 years	13	0
40 - 49 years	19	4
50 - 59 years	17	7
60 - 69 years	8	4
70 - 79 years	3	7
80 - 89 years	0	2
TOTALS	63	24

papers suggest that Alice Peele and others were receiving poor relief on a regular basis.

Arkell has shown that out of 420 people whose probate papers could be matched to Hearth Tax returns from thirty-two parishes in Warwickshire, there were only seventeen surviving inventories from non-liable households.[89] In Brancepeth, Alice Peele's inventory, dated 1673, was the only inventory surviving from those who were exempt from paying the Hearth Tax. It was valued at only £1. 6d. Her belongings amounted to one bedstead, a table, and a chest.[90] At this level, there would appear to be little point in drawing up an inventory, particularly for married men, whose wives and children would claim the family's possessions.

The people who were exempt from paying the Hearth Tax in Brancepeth were not mostly feckless young people who had married before they had sufficient resources to support themselves. They appear to have been middle-aged men who often had sizeable families to support, and may have suffered ill-health as part of the causes of their poverty. Widows formed the other traceable group; most were aged over 60. There were also a number of elderly men among the exempt, although only one was probably aged over 70. Ninety-two per cent of the exempt had surnames familiar in Brancepeth, and sixty-five per cent could be found amongst the Family Reconstitution population of the parish. Poverty in Brancepeth would seem therefore to have been a problem which would have touched many of the families of the parish, at different times in the life-cycle. The poor of Brancepeth were not an alien group of transitory residents from outside, who could be considered beyond the pale of

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[89] T. Arkell, 'The Incidence of Poverty in England in the Later Seventeenth Century', Social History, Vol. 12, (1987), p. 33.

[90] DULASC, Inventory of Alice Peele, Tudhoe, 1673.

neighbourly charity; they were the poor of the parish, who were known as family members and long-standing neighbours.

Of the households which could be linked to the Family Reconstitution, only fifteen per cent of those who were liable to pay the Hearth Tax were living in houses with more than two hearths. Of the thirty households in this situation only nine had more than five hearths. The poor of Brancepeth appear not to have had much opportunity to beg for neighbourly assistance from nearby big houses in Brancepeth parish. The food and other necessities to help to tide the poor over a crisis is more likely to have come from households which were not a great deal better off themselves.

3.7 The social hierarchy

In a parish with few gentry, and a large number of people who are not far from poverty, the obvious 'degrees and sorts' of people are perhaps less easy for the historian to recognise.[91] In Brancepeth parish, however, the rector, curate and churchwardens created their own statement of social order, when Brancepeth church was refitted and a new church seating plan was drawn up in 1639.[92] The seats were allotted to the parishioners for their 'natural life each of them if they continue inhabitants and householders in this parish and not otherwise (they coming duly to Church and ordering themselves decently there)'.[93] This was a different kind of seating plan to the one drawn up in Myddle, where the pews went with particular farms within the parish.[94] Significantly, the

[91] K. Wrightson, 'Estates, Degrees and Sorts', History Today, Vol. 37 No. 1, (1987).

[92] BC, Church Seating Plan.

[93] BC, Church Seating Plan.

[94] R. Gough, The History of Myddle, edited by D. Hey, (London, 1988), p. 77.

Brancepeth seating plan was drawn up during the rectorship of John Cosin, whose ideas about Arminian church practices no doubt influenced the 'placing both of Men and Women according to their several degrees and qualities'.[95]

Figure 3.5 shows an outline of the pew layout as it was shown on the Brancepeth church seating plan. The seats which clearly had the highest status were those closest to the chancel screen.[96] In Brancepeth these were allotted to the gentry families. Behind them, in the north and south transepts, and in the nave, were the lower orders, placed 'according to their several degrees and qualities as now they are'.[97] Behind the gentry in the south and north transepts, were the non-gentry men; women, mostly their wives, were consigned to the back rows of the transepts. In the nave of the church, men were seated in the two central aisles, and women were confined to the side aisles.

According to the plan, the churchwardens were to 'suffer no servants or meaner youth of either sex to sit within any of those seats or pews erected for the householders'.[98] Clearly, status was connected to being a householder. The status of servants, even if they were sons or daughters of more prosperous householders, was in this instance, determined by their current position as a servant.

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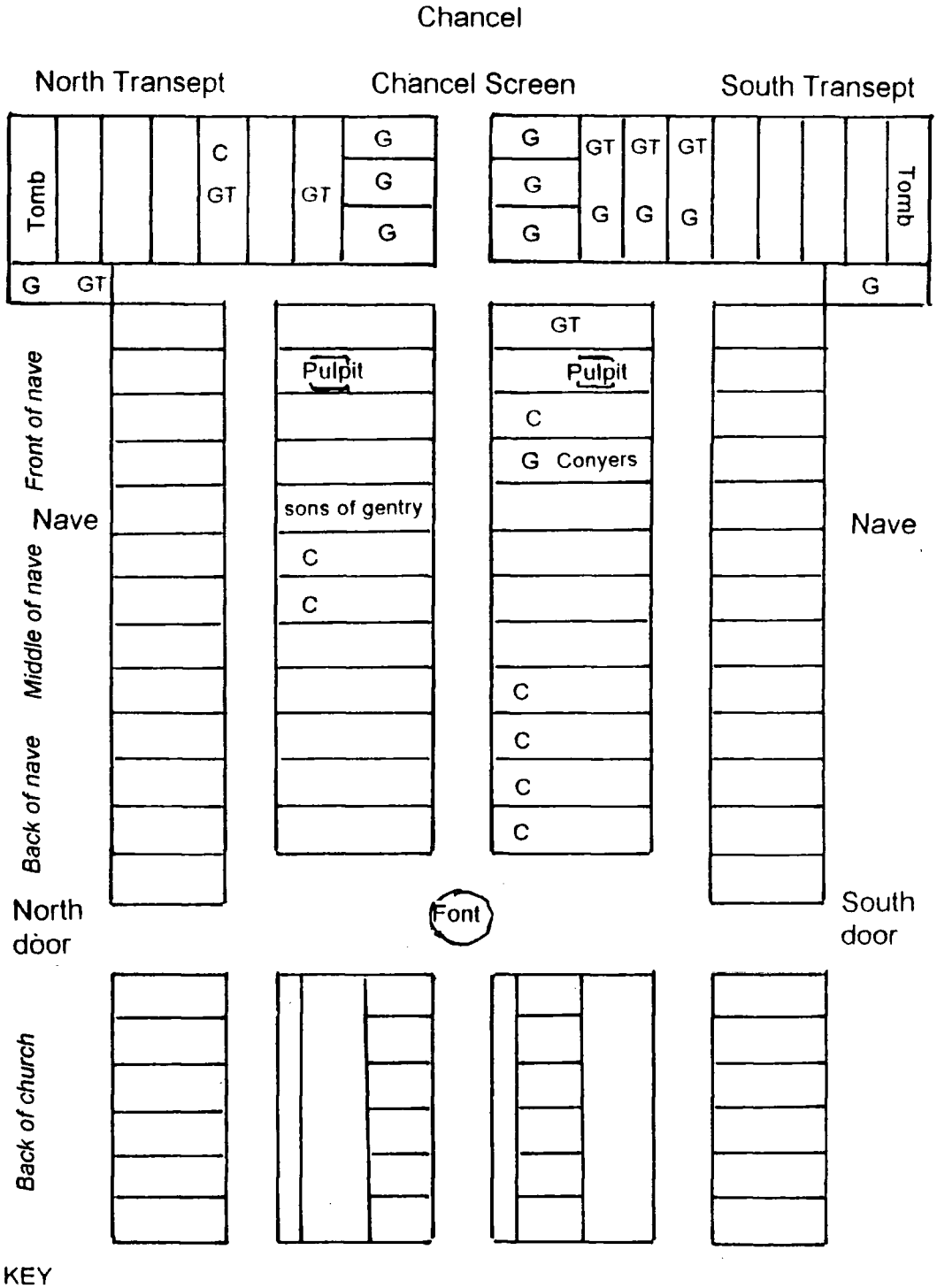
[95] BC, Church Seating Plan.

[96] S. Amussen, An Ordered Society, (New York, 1988), p. 141-2; D. Hey, 'Introduction', in Hey, (ed.), History of Myddle.

[97] BC, Church Seating Plan.

[98] BC, Church Seating Plan.

Figure 3.5 Brancepeth church seating arrangements in 1639



In order to further investigate the social order shown on the Brancepeth seating plan, the named individuals on the seating plan were matched to the Family Reconstitution. Seventy-four per cent of the households represented on the seating plan could be found on the Family Reconstitution (160 out of 215 households). In addition, six could be traced to the spare burials file. Some of the remaining forty-nine names which could not be traced included 'Mr Brown and his wife when they fix in the Parish', and 'Mr Hodgson's tenant'. There were several gaps in the transcription, which made matching difficult, where just a surname or first name had been transcribed, e.g. '(space) Douthwaite senior'. There were also some pews left unallocated, possibly to accommodate changes in the social order, when they became necessary, or because the seats had not been paid for.[99] Because there was a high percentage of matches with the Family Reconstitution, the church seating plan provides very valuable evidence of the social order of this community, as it appeared to the rector, the curate, and the four churchwardens of the parish in 1639.

Social order in parishes, particularly when publicly displayed through the allocation of church pews, caused considerable conflict in some local communities, leading to pew disputes.[100] This was partly because social status was not easily defined, and was constantly changing. The Brancepeth seating plan, linked to the Family Reconstitution and other documents already discussed in this chapter, makes possible an inside glimpse into the definition of 'degrees and qualities' in Brancepeth in the minds of the clergy and churchwardens,

[99] Amussen, Ordered Society, p. 141-2.

[100] N. Alldridge, 'Loyalty and Identity in Chester Parishes 1540-1640', in S. J. Wright, (ed.), Parish, Church and People, (London, 1988), pp. 94-5; Amussen, Ordered Society, pp. 140-1.

and makes it possible to assess whether social status was based wholly on wealth, or whether other factors were also important.

The seats nearest the chancel screen were clearly reserved for the gentry families or their tenants. Only fifteen places in the whole seating plan were allocated to householders who were termed Mr, and some of these were for them or their tenants, suggesting that they were not expected to spend time in the parish. Less than seven per cent of the households on the seating plan were therefore of gentry status; only six of those who were clearly resident in the parish (from the Family Reconstitution evidence) were of gentry status. The seating plan therefore adds to the evidence that there were few resident gentry in the social hierarchy of Brancepeth.

Below the level of gentry, the seating plan is more difficult to analyse. It is not clear whether the seats in the south and north transepts were considered of higher status than the front rows of the nave. The south transept was occupied by some of the Tudhoe fee farm tenants. However, the transepts were not apparently kept for freeholders and fee farmers exclusively; at lease two of the householders in the transepts were leaseholders.[101] The first five front pews of the nave were occupied by people such as the sons of Mr Wren and Mr Lee, Mr Conyers (the bailiff of the Brancepeth Lordship) and his wife, the clerk, tenants of the recusant Swinburne family of Holywell, and householders such as John Harrison who ran the Brandon corn mill. These people are clearly of lower status than the gentry seated by the chancel screen, but were probably higher in status than most of the people who sat behind them in the nave.

[101] PRO, LR2/192, Anthony Farrow and Martin Nicholson.

To fully explore links between financial status and the order of the church seating, it is necessary to look in detail at householders who also appear on the Family Reconstitution and who appear on the 1607 survey, or the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment, or whose inventory has survived. This independent evidence of financial status can be used to assess whether the Brancepeth parishioners sat in a strictly hierarchical seating order, based on the financial circumstances of each family household. This kind of matching is possible because so many of the householders can be traced to the Family Reconstitution. Inventories of people with the same name who died ten or twenty years later could not be matched with confidence without the basic family details contained on the FRFs. For this reason, there are no comparative detailed studies analysing the social order shown in church seating plans, except those based on Gough's plan of Myddle, where Gough's book is able to fill in the life-cycle history of the families involved.[102] This makes the Brancepeth Church Seating Plan, combined with a Family Reconstitution and record linkage project, a particularly valuable document.

Of the householders who were shown on the seating plan, twenty-three could be matched to both the Family Reconstitution and the 1607 survey. Two of those who were seated in the first five pews of the nave were farming forty-one and fifty-nine acres of land. The householders who occupied pews in the middle of the nave ranged from a cottager with no land to householders with between nine and a quarter acres and twenty-eight and a half acres. One of the householders sitting in the rear of the nave was a cottager; the other farmed twenty-one and a half acres of land. By looking at the few householders which could be traced, via the Family Reconstitution to the 1607 survey, it would appear that the seating

[102] K. Wrightson, 'Estates, Degrees and Sorts'; D. Hey, An English Rural Community: Myddle Under the Tudors and Stuarts, (Leicester, 1974).

in the nave of the church was not strictly allocated according to the amount of land which each householder farmed, although those who had over forty acres were seated near the front, while cottagers were seated towards the back.

The combined Hearth Tax assessment of 1665 and 1666, though made twenty-six years later than the seating plan, can also be used to investigate the social hierarchy of the church seating plan. The Hearth Tax assessment was matched via the Family Reconstitution to the seating plan. Of the thirty-six householders on the seating plan who could be matched to the Hearth Tax, many were widows by 1666. Amongst the males, of those who had three hearths, one was seated in the south transept, and the other was seated behind the north door, at the back of the church. Of the three household heads who had two hearths and were liable to pay the Hearth Tax, one sat in the south transept, one sat in the middle of the church, and one sat towards the rear of the nave. The one-hearth male household heads who were taxable in 1665 occupied pews around the middle and back of the nave, except for one who sat in a seat by the Chancel Screen, as tenant of Mr Salvin, and one who was seated in the north transept. The exempt householders occupied pews at the back of the nave. There are obviously difficulties in matching enough householders to be able to draw conclusions, because of the twenty-six year time lag between the two records. However, the Hearth Tax adds some evidence to the suggestion that the more affluent male householders were placed near the front of the nave, with the 'just surviving' and poorer householders near the back.

The financial circumstances of widows were often much worse than the financial circumstances of their household when their husbands were

alive.[103] For this reason, the matching of widows' inventories or Hearth Tax assessments to their church seating positions when married would be unhelpful in explaining the circumstances of these women when the seating plan was drawn up in 1639.

Twenty-four inventories could be matched to both the seating plan and the Family Reconstitution. Seventeen of these inventories were those of male householders. Two sat in the front row of the pews next to the chancel screen, in the seats closest to the altar, at the front of the church, in the centre. Their inventories amounted to over £470 (Cuthbert Jackson) and over £1,000 (John Brabant). Nicholas Robson of Hill House was placed in the north transept; his inventory was worth over £402.[104] The inventories of three of the householders who sat in the front pews of the nave ranged from less than £16 to over £345. The seven traceable householders who sat in the middle rows of the nave had inventories ranging from a negative balance to over £135. Four of the householders seated in the back pews had inventory balances which ranged from less than £28 to over £262. However, the highest value inventory was made in 1677. In the thirty-six years following the drawing up of the church seating plan there was plenty of time for a householder to build up considerable assets. The other anomalies suggest that inventories, often made years later, are not a sensitive indicator of social status in a previous period, because assets can also reduce in a person's lifetime. An alternative explanation to the discrepancies between inventoried wealth and church seating order could be that financial status may not have been the only criterion of degrees and qualities in the minds of those who drew up the seating plan.

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[103] See chapter 3 section 3.8 for a fuller discussion of this point.

[104] DULASC, Inventories of Cuthbert Jackson 1677, John Brabant 1687, and Nicholas Robson 1647.

In Brancepeth most of the women sat in separate pews from their husbands. However, in Brancepeth the policy of gender segregation did not apply to gentry women.[105] In the Brancepeth seating plan, women's status was not automatically set by the status of their husbands. An example of this is the placing of Charles Pickering and Cuthbert Atkinson and their wives. Both men were allocated space in the sixth row from the front of the nave. However, Charles Pickering's wife was seated in the fifth row from the front of the side aisle, while Cuthbert Atkinson's wife occupied a seat three rows further back. The widows were not all seated towards the front even though some would have been householders in their own right. Although part of the reason for wives not sitting in parallel rows to their husbands may have been the need to accommodate widows in appropriate pews, this does not seem wholly to account for the different ordering of the womenfolk. However, most women shared a broadly similar ranking to their husbands, although they were usually not grouped with the wives of the other menfolk who shared the same pew as their husbands. This may reflect the practical difficulties of grouping some women together in the same pews. Pew disputes in church court cases suggest that very personal animosities could build up when rivals shared the same pew. In 1602 in nearby St. Oswald's parish, one woman stuck a pin into the buttock of another woman who tried to force her way into her pew and sit on her.[106] The large quantity of defamation cases between women in the church courts show that some very fierce battles could be waged, verbally, and sometimes physically. The Arminian dream of church services being conducted in an orderly manner was more likely to be

[105] Amussen, Ordered Society, p. 143.

[106] J. Barmby, (ed.), Churchwardens' accounts of Pittington and other parishes in the diocese of Durham, 1580-1700, Surtees Society, Vol. 84, (1888), Appendix B: Court of the Officiality of the Dean and Chapter, p. 371.

achieved if women were placed in pews with their friends rather than their enemies.[107]

The seating plan stated that the parson and churchwardens could 'supply those seats that now or hereafter shall be void with fit persons as occasion shall be offered'.[108] Perhaps some of the residents were not considered proper persons to be allocated a seat, or simply would not pay the required fee. George Douthwaite, seated in the front row of the nave, was married at the time the seating plan was drawn up. However, a letter from the curate William Milburn to the Rector John Cosin in 1638 refers to George Douthwaite's wife's conversion to recusancy.[109] She was not allocated a pew on the seating plan. The recusant gentry family, the Claxtons of Waterhouse, are noticeably absent from the church seating plan. So was Nicholas Catherick, despite being resident in the parish when the Protestation Returns were made early in 1642, when both Thomas Claxton of Waterhouse and Nicholas Catherick were listed as having refused the Protestation, 'being recusants'.[110] Six recusant wives who could be traced on the Family Reconstitution were found to be absent from the seating plan, although their husbands had seats. Over the whole of the seventeenth century, recusants can be traced to sixty-nine FRFs on the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution, although most of the entries are burials of family members.[111] Out of eighteen FRFs which contained

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[107] M. Tillbrooke, 'Arminianism and Society in County Durham, 1617-1642', in D. Marcombe, (ed.), The Last Principality, (Nottingham, 1987), p. 212; Amusen, Ordered Society, p. 143.

[108] BC, Church Seating Plan.

[109] G. Ornsby, (ed.), The Correspondence of John Cosin, Part 1, Surtees Society, Vol. 52, (1869), pp. 221-2.

[110] H. M. Wood, (ed.), Durham Protestations, Surtees Society, Vol. 135, 1922, p. 78.

[111] Arkell found recusants in the burial registers of Rowington, Warwickshire, T. Arkell, 'An Enquiry into the Frequency of the Parochial Registration of Catholics in a Seventeenth-Century Warwickshire Parish', Local Population Studies, No. 9, (1972).

people reported for recusancy between 1635-38, eight of these families were represented on the church seating plan. The church seating plan clearly reflects the status of some families who could perhaps be described as church papists, or whose religious allegiances were divided between the Church of England and Catholicism.[112]

The Protestation Returns, parish registers, and other sources occasionally show the names of church officers. The overseers in 1642 sat near to the front of the nave, but of the nine men traced as previous churchwardens, only one sat in the north transept; the others sat in various places in the nave.[113] The previous holding of church or parish offices does not appear to have been a mark of status in the ordering of the church seats.

The possibility that age could be significant was also investigated. Mr Lee's sons, for example, were not seated by the chancel screen, but were placed in the fifth pew from the front of the nave, alongside two of Mr Wren's sons, behind non-gentry villagers such as John Harrison of Sleetburn house and mill, and John Hull senior. However, in front of these people was Ralph Douthwaite junior, sitting in the same pew as Stephen Cockey, a close relative of the curate. Both Martin Rippon of Dicken House and Martin Rippon of Primroseside were born in the same year, but Martin Rippon of Dicken House sat two pews in front of Martin Rippon of Primroseside. In addition, a random check of ages of householders shown on the Family Reconstitution did not suggest that older householders were seated nearer the front than younger householders.

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[112] See A. Walsham, Church Papists, (Woodbridge, 1993), p. 80.

[113] DCRO, Ep/Br/1.

The possibility that families were seated together was also tested. The distribution of surnames throughout the seating plan shows that related household heads were not normally seated together. For example, male members of the Douthwaite family were seated in the south transept, and in the first, third and eighth pews in the nave. One exception seems to be the Iley family of The Burn, a father and son, and another male of the same surname who sat together in the same pew. If related householders had been seated in 'clans', the matches of surnames in particular pews of the church would have been obvious.

The Brancepeth church seating plan presents a complicated picture of degrees and qualities within the community of Brancepeth parish. It provides an incomplete picture of social hierarchy, partly because of recusancy, and possibly because some householders were unable or unwilling to pay for a seat. A number of reasons for the arrangement of parishioners have been considered. The only patterns which emerge suggest that the ordering of the male householders is linked to prosperity. Where it has been possible to trace the financial status of householders in other records, however, it has been impossible to link the order of seating to very fine differences in wealth. Nevertheless, general patterns have become obvious. Those of gentry status sat beside the chancel screen. Those who sat in the front rows of the nave were generally better-off than those who sat at the back, and those who sat at the back of the north and south transepts appear not to have been wealthier than those who sat in the front pews of the nave. There were only minor differentials as far as amounts of land, goods and money were concerned between many of the householders of Brancepeth. This could be the reason why the gentry were the only ones whose seating positions were very clearly associated with wealth and title.

Although age may have been significant in some situations, younger men may also have been placed further back because they had not been able to accumulate as much wealth as older parishioners. Widows were not automatically placed nearer the front than wives. Wives were not placed in exactly the same order as their husbands, although their position is normally similar. The individual groupings of people in particular pews may reflect a very practical desire of the church wardens to seat people in harmonious groups, for the sake of decency and order in church services.

3.8 Family wealth and family life-cycle

One further point emerges from the matching of records. Family wealth could clearly change within the life-cycle of the family group. Snapshots of economic circumstances, as can be seen in a single record such as an inventory or a Hearth Tax assessment, are not necessarily indicative of the prosperity or otherwise of the family over a period of time. The linking of different financial records can demonstrate this.

The experience of widows is a particularly obvious example. The Family Reconstitution made it possible to compare the inventories of some widows with those of their spouses. When Nicholas Brack of Willington died in 1668, his estate was valued at £122. 3s. 10d. When his widow, Dorothy, died in 1682, her estate was only valued at £32.19s. 8d. John Coleman of Brancepeth died in 1675; his estate was valued at £262. 10s. When his widow Adeline died in 1697, her estate was worth only £34. 8s. 7d. Martin Hull of Brancepeth died in 1618; his estate was worth £344. 10s. 8d. His widow Jane's goods were worth only £32. 7s. 9d. by 1635. When George Jenkinson of Burnigill died in 1637, his inventory was worth £215. 15s. 8d. The inventory of his widow Jane was worth only £20. 10s.

Humphrey Sickerwham of Helmington Row died in 1608; his goods were worth £29. 7s. The estate of his wife, Elizabeth, who died the following year, was £26. 12s. 8d.[114] The pattern is clear. The values of inventories show the wealth of a household or individual at a particular time in their life. Widows could be resident in a household whose goods are valued at over £300 when married, only to find themselves with personal property worth only about a tenth of that sum, particularly after numbers of years as a widow.

This kind of evidence helps to put assessments of the economic status of family groups based on only one type of document into context. Pamela Sharpe pointed out in her article on classifying FRFs in the Colyton Family Reconstitution, using financial and occupational records, 'the underlying problem, of course, is that while the people can be socially mobile during their lives, this analysis is static'.[115] In Brancepeth, by linking a variety of financial information to particular FRFs, it is occasionally possible to use snapshots at different times in the family life cycle to observe changes in the financial circumstances of the household.

3.9 The value of Family Reconstitution combined with record linkage in Brancepeth

The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth has provided a sound basis for the linking of other records. The wills, inventories, land records, Hearth Tax assessments and the church seating plan have matched well with the FRFs produced by the Family Reconstitution linkage process.

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[114] DULASC, Inventories of Nicholas Brack 1668, Dorothy Brack 1682, John Coleman 1674, Adeline Coleman 1696, Martin Hull 1618, Jane Hull 1635, George Jenkinson 1637, Jane Jenkinson 1672, Humphrey Sickerwham 1608, Elizabeth Sickerwham 1608 (Inventories filed using old-style dating).

[115] P. Sharpe, 'The Total Reconstitution Method: A Tool for Class-Specific Study', Local Population Studies, No. 44, (1990).

This linkage process has been very successful in Brancepeth because of the quality of the parish register and other records, the stability of the parish population, and the order in which the additional sources were linked.

It is impossible to reconstruct the whole of a historical community, including very transient residents, from the kinds of historical sources which survive. However, by matching the evidence of other documents to the population which can be successfully reconstituted into FRFs, it is possible to recognise the type of people who appear in the Family Reconstitution. The high proportion of other records which have linked to the Family Reconstitution shows that the Family Reconstitution is representative of the people who lived in Brancepeth parish who also left wills, inventories, who held leasehold tenancies, who were assessed for the Hearth Tax, and who appeared on the church seating plan. The low proportion of records which could not be matched suggests that there was not a large non-reconstitutable population in Brancepeth who evaded parochial registration, or who were very transient residents.

There are good reasons for the high proportion of each type of record which were matched in this study. Brancepeth had leasehold tenancies with customs which allowed tenancies to be passed to heirs. This made it possible for Brancepeth families to hold on to their family land. Although of low value and acreage, most of the tenancies appear to have been capable of supporting a family at a very modest level of existence. The evidence presented in this chapter fits with the findings of chapter two; we now have a better understanding of the reasons for the low turnover of surnames, the lack of domestic comfort in homes and the priorities of self-sufficiency.

It is possible to conclude that this study of social networks is based on a parish which is mainly populated by people who were poor, nearly poor, just managing, or up to what would be described as smallholder or husbandman status in other parts of the country. In addition there was a very small number of people who could be described as of gentry status. Therefore the experience of most families was that of living amongst households who were in broadly similar financial circumstances to themselves. Because such a large number of families have been successfully reconstituted, it is clear that many families in Brancepeth would have known a large number of other families who, like them, had been resident in the parish for many years. The families which participated in the social networks of parish life were able to do so without being unduly influenced by a local social hierarchy based on wealth.

Chapter 4 Social Networks

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the social networks of families which appear in the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution. In this section I will outline the approach taken to the network analysis work, and the sources used. The next section of the chapter will explain the methodology of social network analysis and discuss the techniques chosen for this study. The chapter will then discuss the types of networks analysed and the results produced. The final section of the chapter will compare the results of the analyses of the different networks.

Chapter two has shown how the residents of Brancepeth had a shared history as tenants of the same lordship. The persistence of many surnames in the parish from 1570 to the latter part of the seventeenth century suggests that many of the seventeenth century tenants may have been descended from the tenants of the Earls of Westmorland. One central manorial court dealt with tenancy matters and problems from all over the lordship. In the early seventeenth century, the tenants shared a common enemy in the person of Henry Sanderson, and the problems of increased rents and fines affected all the leaseholders, who made up the majority of householders. Although evidence from the later seventeenth century is less complete, the suggestions are, from the size of the population and the stability of names, that many of these families were able to remain in the parish, during the time of their new landlords, the Cole family. Chapter three has shown that most of the inhabitants of the parish were of similar economic status, and that there was no sizeable group of gentry or yeomen in the parish. It could be concluded that the

residents of Brancepeth parish had many shared interests, and could perhaps be expected to operate as a social community.

As we have seen from chapter two, Brancepeth parish had a population of about 1500 people in the seventeenth century. This is about ten times the size of Highley in Shropshire, and considerably larger than Myddle in Shropshire and Terling in Essex, but smaller than the population of Whickham in County Durham, all of which have been the subject of community studies.[1] Brancepeth was made up of seven townships, and occupied a territory of over thirty square miles in size. The landscape was very varied, and in this hilly area, there were natural features of the landscape which could have divided and united different parts of the parish.

The additional administrative responsibilities given to parishes in the Tudor period strengthened the shared interests of parishioners, which may have led to an increasing sense of the parish as a community, at least in the south of England. However, in northern parishes which contained a number of townships, some of the new responsibilities for poor relief, mending roads, and law and order were devolved to officers acting for the individual townships, rather than to the parish as a whole. As a consequence, we could possibly find the local community at the township, rather than the parish level of administration, particularly in parishes which extend over a large geographical area.

[1] G. Nair, Highley: The Development of a Community 1550-1880, (Oxford, 1988), p. 104; D. Hey, 'Introduction', in R. Gough, The History of Myddle, edited by D. Hey, London, 1988), p. 22; K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525-1700, (Oxford, 2nd ed. 1995), p. 48; D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham 1560 - 1765, (Oxford, 1991), p. 174.

Pollock and Maitland have argued that township boundaries are older than parishes, and that the township was essentially a social community of families (the 'villata') who farmed particular pieces of land in a geographical area.[2] For this reason, townships often have detached portions, and some upland areas remained common to a number of townships for long periods of time. In this study, because Brancepeth covers a large area, divided into seven townships, as shown in Figure 4.1, it is possible to test whether the local community was made up of smaller units of sociability at township level, within the larger unit of the parish. By analysing networks of social relationships between the residents of Brancepeth, we can assess the extent to which the community of the township survived in an early modern world, or whether social relationships were initiated within a parish-wide social community.

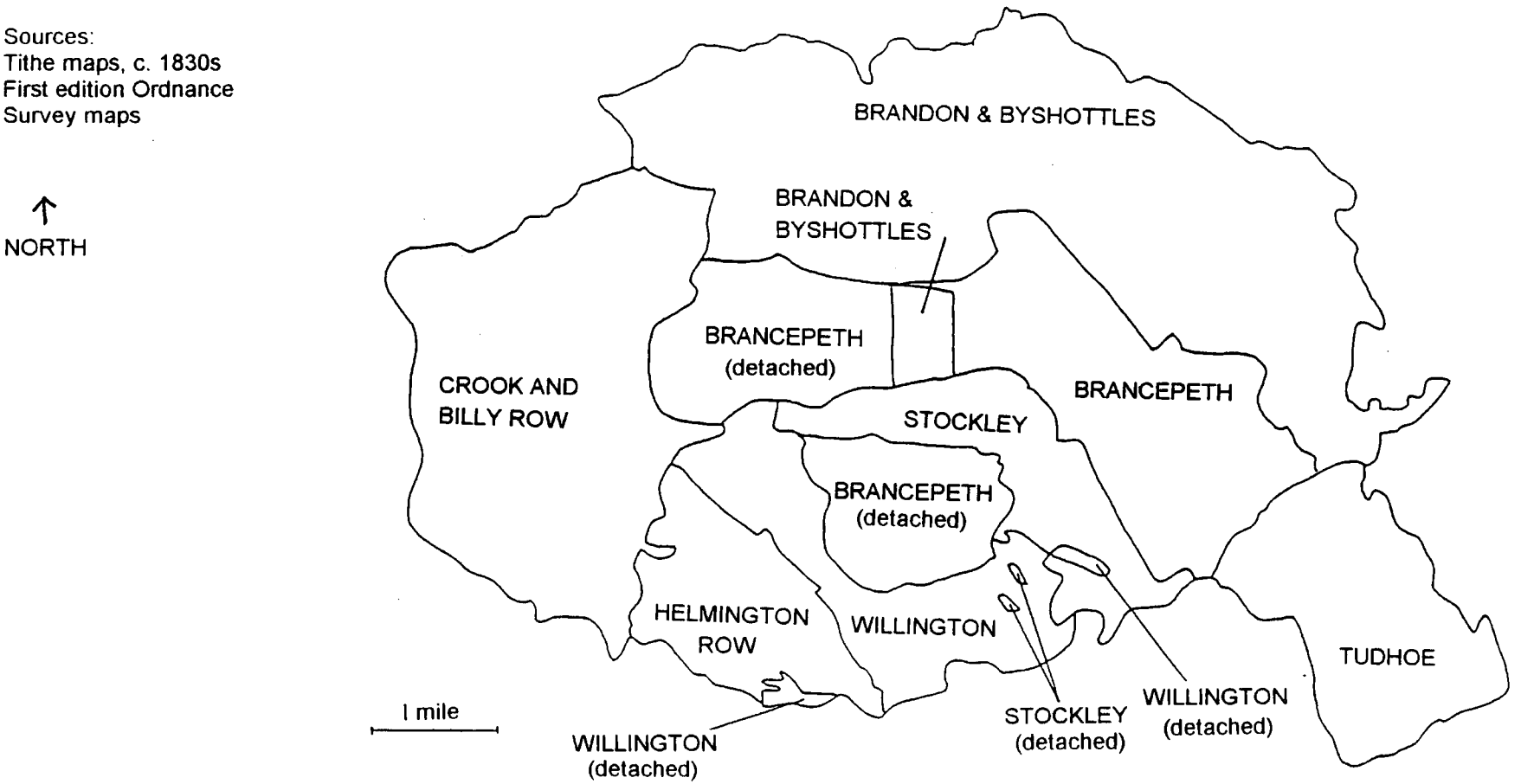
The social networks examined in this chapter are based on evidence of money lent on trust, the witnessing of wills, the appraising of inventories and kinship. Evidence of loans of money made on trust can be found in the lists of debtors and creditors in the Brancepeth inventories. The analysis of will witnesses and testators is based on the lists of witnesses contained in the Brancepeth wills. The networks between the families of the deceased and the appraisers are investigated using the lists of appraisers contained in the Brancepeth inventories. Kinship networks between the households listed on the Hearth Tax assessment are analysed using the evidence of the Family Reconstitution, and the distribution of matching surnames.

Although the relationships shown when witnessing a will and appraising an inventory may happen within the same group of people

[2] F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland, The History of English Law, Vol. 1, (Cambridge, 1968), p. 561-565.

Figure 4.1 The townships of Brancepeth parish

Sources:
Tithe maps, c. 1830s
First edition Ordnance Survey maps



within a space of a few weeks, the nature of the relationship is different. Someone who is chosen to witness a will may not be the most appropriate person to draw up the inventory of goods. A connection which shows itself in a loan of money may not indicate as intimate a relationship as the witnessing of a will. For some social functions, neighbours from the same township might have been preferred, but for other kinds of relationships, it may have been normal to ask people from a wider geographical area.

Although all these relationships served different social functions, they are the kinds of relationships which bound communities together. These networks can be used to assess whether these co-operative relationships bound parishes like Brancepeth together as one social community, and they can be used to define subgroups within the parish.

4.2 Methodology: social network analysis

In this section I will outline the historical development of social network analysis and describe the methods used in this thesis.

The concept of the social network was born from the disciplines of psychology and anthropology. At Harvard University in the 1930s, psychologists were investigating ideas of group structure at the same time as anthropologists, influenced by the work of English anthropologist, Radcliffe-Brown, were developing ideas of interdependence in social structures. Also influenced by Radcliffe-Brown, at Manchester University, social anthropologists were exploring tribal societies, and small communities in England. From these lines of research came the concept of the social network, and the basic mathematical techniques.[3] In England,

[3] J. Scott, Social Network Analysis: A Handbook, (London, 1991), pp. 7-38.

it was social anthropologists John Barnes, Elizabeth Bott and Clyde Mitchell who became the important names in the history of network analysis.[4] In 1969, Mitchell described many of the concepts of network analysis which are now translated into mathematical formulae and can be calculated by computer. By 1972, Barnes was able to describe the concept of the adjacency matrix, the clique, and snowball sampling, for example.[5] Much of the mathematical development of the methodology, however, was due to the American researchers, based on the ideas of graph theory.[6]

Richard Smith and Emmanuel Todd, in their Ph. D. theses, were the early pioneers of network analysis in historical studies.[7] Smith used the concept of the ego-centric network, as shown in Figure 4.2, to study medieval tenants in the manor of Redgrave. Todd compared measurements of kinship density obtained from analysing early census-type listings of village communities. Wrightson and Levine followed the same method of calculating kinship density to compare kinship density in Terling with Todd's findings.[8] They later explored the concept of ego-

[4] J. A. Barnes, 'Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish, Human Relations, Vol. 7, (1954); E. Bott, Family and Social Network, (London, 1957); J. C. Mitchell, 'The Concept and Use of Social Networks', in J. C. Mitchell, (ed.), Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns, (Manchester, 1969).

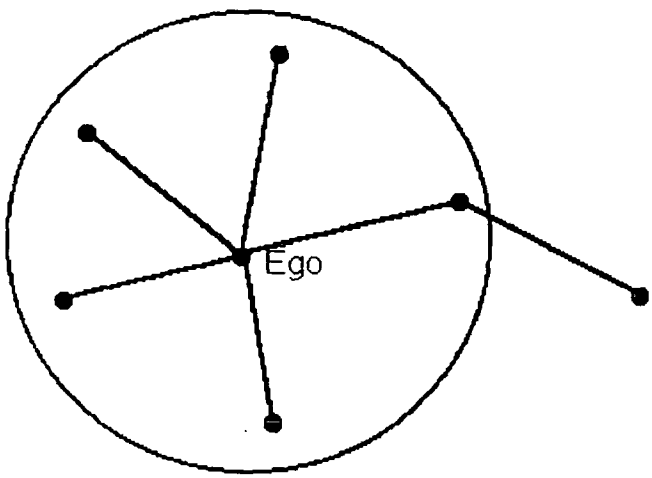
[5] J. A. Barnes, 'Social Networks', Current Topics in Anthropology, Vol. 5, (1972).

[6] Scott, Network Analysis, p. 13.

[7] R. M. Smith, 'English Peasant Lifecycles and Socioeconomic Networks', Ph. D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1974; E. Todd, 'Seven Peasant Communities in Pre-Industrial Europe', Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1976. R. M. Smith's thesis work was subsquently published in R. M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours in a thirteenth-century Suffolk community', Journal of Family History, Vol. 4, (1979).

[8] Wrightson and Levine, Terling.

Figure 4.2 An ego-centric network



● node (often a person in a network, in this study a family group)

— straight lines indicate links between nodes

⌣ circle denotes limits of first-order contacts

centric networks in their attempt to discover whether there was a bastardy-prone subgroup within Terling.[9]

In the late 1970s sociologist Barry Wellman published his study of the ego-centric networks of modern-day East Yorkers, in his search for the realities of community in this area of Toronto, Canada.[10] He took a random sample of 845 adults living in East York, and questioned them about their six closest intimates, and the interconnecting ties between the contacts named. Wellman's work showed that it was possible to use network analysis concepts for sociological studies of large populations. In 1978 he founded INSNA, (the International Network of Social Network Analysis).[11] INSNA has aided communication between researchers in different countries and academic disciplines, publishing Connections,[12] organising conferences, and facilitating an electronic discussion group. The bringing together of a very wide range of researchers has led to a considerable amount of development in the techniques of social network analysis over the last two decades.

As mathematics played an increasing part in the definition of network analysis concepts, the development of the methodology became more closely associated with American and Canadian sociologists than with English anthropologists or historians. The social network analysis methodology which emerged from these influences was very mathematical, but as such, it made a far wider range of analysis possible.

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[9] D. Levine and K. Wrightson, 'The Social Context of Illegitimacy in Early Modern England', in P. Laslett, with K. Oosterveen and R. M. Smith, (eds.), Bastardy and its comparative history, (Cambridge, M. A., 1980).

[10] B. Wellman, 'The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 84, (1979).

[11] INSNA Web site, http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/project/INSNA/ins_inf.html 22/12/99.

[12] Connections (ISSN 0226-1776).

The new procedures were able to deal with the structure of the whole network. Computers have made it possible to discover patterns of connections in large networks which manual methods of analysis might never detect.

Ucinet, the program used in this study, uses the familiar recording method of network analysis, the matrix, as described in Barnes' article in 1972.[13] The matrices used in this study show the actors (or nodes as they are often called in network analysis terminology) on both axes of the matrix and connections between the nodes in the appropriate row and column of the matrix. Figure 4.3 shows a directional matrix. This is used for relationships which are not necessarily reciprocal, such as the lending of money. These relationships are shown as running from the nodes in the rows to the nodes in the columns. A symmetrical matrix, as shown in Figure 4.4, is used where relationships between nodes are reciprocal. Although for many types of analysis, the matrices are binary, representing either the presence or absence of a connection, it is also possible to work with valued data, if there are several connections between some nodes, or if some connections are stronger than others. In some types of analysis, the diagonal in the matrix is not valid, as in Figure 4.3. Node A cannot lend money to node A if the nodes are all individuals. However, if the nodes are groups of people, it could be appropriate to enter values in the diagonal, as shown in Figure 4.4.

The matrices are the data files which Ucinet uses to perform the analyses requested. The results of most kinds of analysis are produced in tabular form. In this study, the diagrams showing connections between

[13] S. P. Borgatti, M. G. Everett, and L. C. Freeman, Ucinet 4, Version 1.0, (Columbia, 1992), Ucinet 5, (Natick, 1999); Barnes, 'Social Networks'.

Figure 4.3 A directional matrix

	A	B	C	D	E
A	-	1	1	0	0
B	1	-	0	1	1
C	0	1	-	0	1
D	1	0	0	-	0
E	0	0	0	0	-

Figure 4.4 A symmetrical valued matrix

	A	B	C	D	E
A	25	16	7	9	2
B	16	46	5	6	2
C	7	5	32	4	5
D	9	6	4	19	10
E	2	2	5	10	28

nodes were produced by exporting the results to Krackplot, a program designed to plot network analysis diagrams.[14]

To perform network analysis, the data matrix created by the researcher should include all the connections between the nodes in a matrix.[15] If no connection is recorded, the program records the value 0. It is not possible to leave an entry blank because of inadequate information. The social scientist working with real data has to assess the extent to which their data falls short of this mathematical ideal, and the effect which missing data may have on the results of different analyses.

Historians have been hesitant to attempt the analysis of whole networks, partly because they are aware that they cannot identify a full range of connections between individuals.[16] However, the problems of missing data are not confined to network analysis. Historians have always had to design hypotheses which can be tested with partial evidence, with the quality and quantity of sources made available to them. An analysis of the kinsfolk recognised in a set of wills from a single parish, for example, must acknowledge that the percentages of different kin recognised would very likely be different if a different set of wills had survived from the same parish. Hopefully, if sufficiently large numbers of wills are involved, the basic patterns would be similar.

The network analysis procedures chosen for this study were assessed as suitable to be used with the historical data available.

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[14] D. Krackhardt, M. Lundberg and L. O'Rourke, 'Krackplot: A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words', Connections, Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2, (1993).

[15] See discussion in Scott, Network Analysis, pp. 60-65.

[16] R. M. Smith, 'Appendix: A note on network analysis in relation to the bastardy prone sub-society', in P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R. M. Smith, (eds.), Bastardy and its Comparative History, (Cambridge M. A., 1980), p. 241.

Ucinet's capacity to discover cohesive subgroups within a large network was considered to be potentially very useful. There are a number of different ways of defining subgroups. Figures 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 show some examples. In the four-clique, as shown in Figure 4.5, each node is connected to every other node either directly, or by no more than three intermediaries. However, in the clique structure, there may be only one node connecting most of the nodes, and if this node was removed from the network, some nodes might find themselves totally unconnected. In the two-plex shown in Figure 4.6, each node is connected directly to every other node except two, forming an extremely cohesive group. Figure 4.7 shows a three-clan with six members, where each node is connected to every other node by no more than two intermediaries. The clan can identify subgroups which are not necessarily as cohesive as plexes, but which can be more cohesive than cliques. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 illustrate the subgroup definitions chosen for this study. The two-clan (Figure 4.8) shows every node connected to every other node either directly, or by no more than one intermediary. The two-clique also fulfils this definition, as shown in Figure 4.9.

The other procedure which will be used is more familiar in statistical analysis.[17] Multi-dimensional scaling (known as MDS), can produce a diagram which shows the relationships of nodes to each other in a network. The two-dimensional MDS diagram produced is like a map, showing nodes close to each other if they are well-connected to each other in the network, and far apart if they are poorly connected. MDS provides a measure of the extent to which the diagram is able to represent

[17] See A. P. M. Coxon and C. L. Jones, 'Multi-Dimensional Scaling', in D. M. McKay, N. Schofield and P. Whiteley, (eds.) Data Analysis and the Social Sciences, (London, 1983); D. G. Kendall, 'Maps from marriages', in F. R. Hodgeson, D. G. Kendall, and P. Tautu (eds.), Mathematics in the Archaeological and Historical Sciences, (Edinburgh, 1971).

Figure 4.5 Two types of four-clique, each with nine members

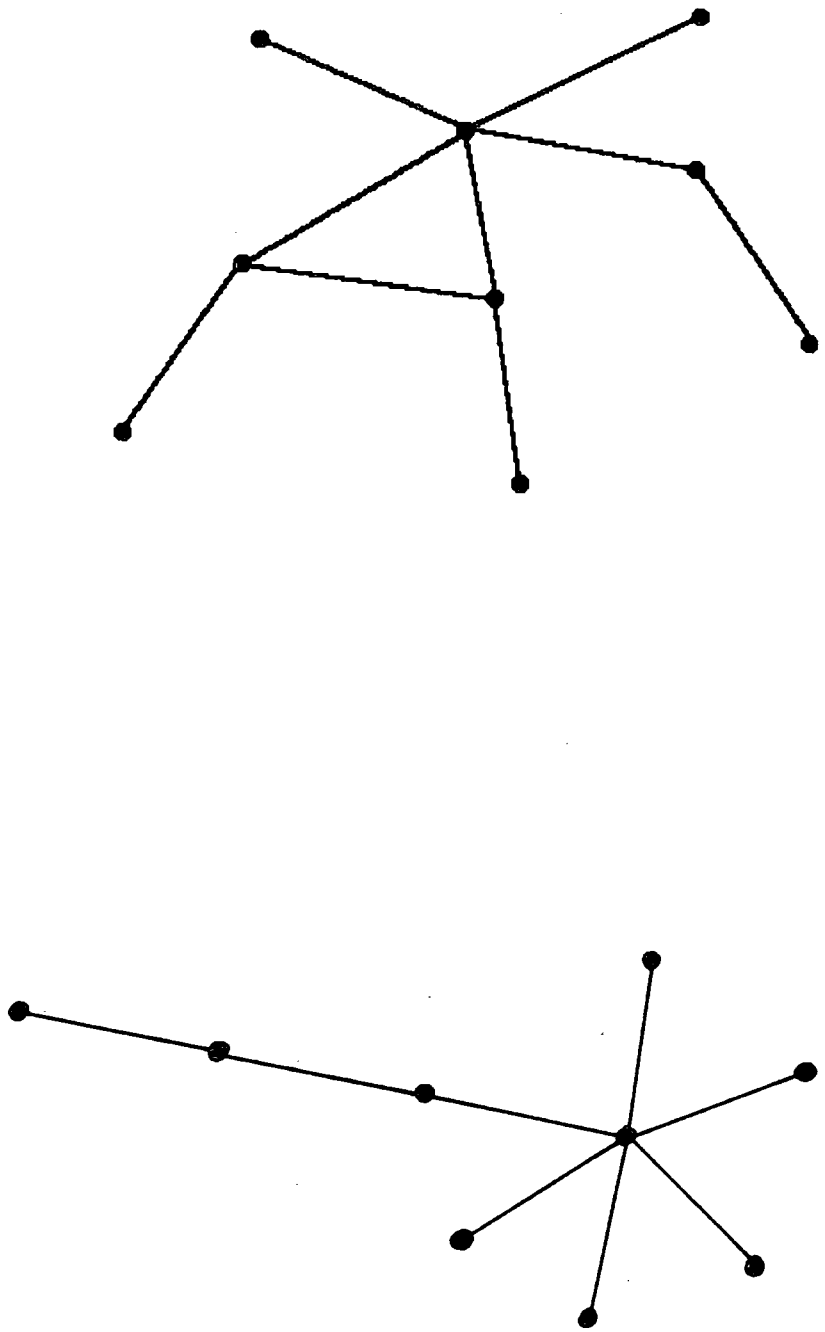


Figure 4.6 A two-plex with eight members

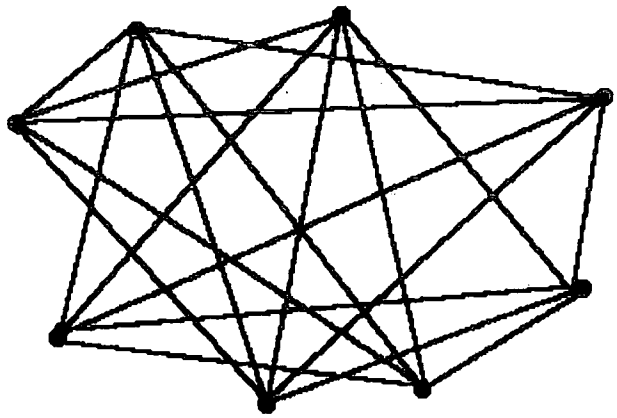


Figure 4.7 A three-clan with six members

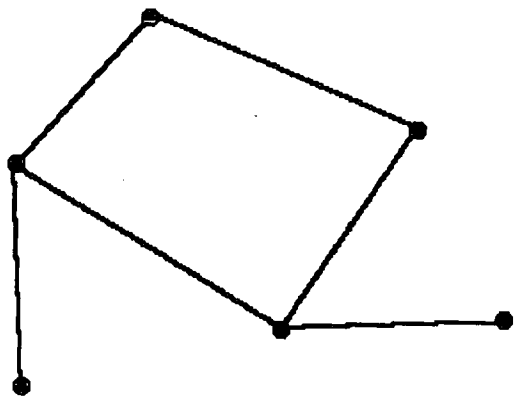


Figure 4.8 A two-clan with six members

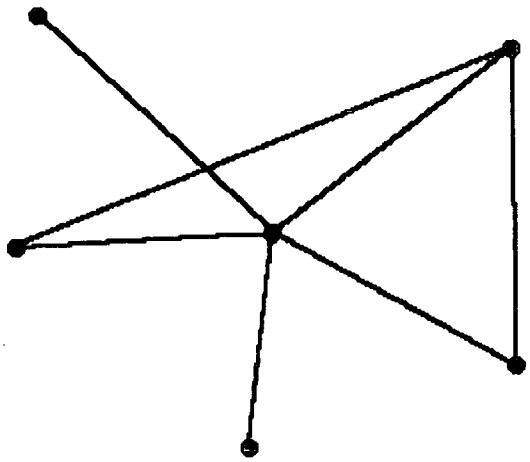
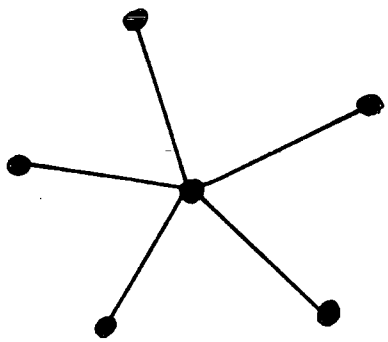


Figure 4.9 A two-clique with six members



the proximities of nodes accurately. Ucinet expresses this 'fit' in terms of stress; the lower the stress, the better the fit.

Metric MDS was considered suitable for this study, using a similarities matrix to calculate a value for the proximity of each node to each other node in the networks studied.[18] Each diagram was produced using the Gower starting configuration. Because the 'maps' produced by MDS are not unique visual representations of the positions of the nodes, the diagrams and stress produced using the Gower starting configuration were compared to those produced using random starting configurations.

In order to check whether there are common patterns of interaction in the networks analysed, statistical correlations between matrices have been used in this study. The correlation between two matrices can be tested using the Quadratic Assignment Procedure available in Ucinet 4. Firstly, the program calculates the observed correlation coefficient between the two data matrices. Secondly, the program randomly permutes the rows and columns of one of the matrices, and recalculates the correlation coefficient. This procedure is repeated a large number of times. If no more than five per cent of the correlation coefficients produced by the random permutations are equal to or greater than the observed correlation coefficient, the similarity between the two matrices is statistically significant at the five per cent level.[19] The 'Autocorrelation' procedure, available on Ucinet 5, makes it possible to correlate a single matrix with a vector of attribute, such as a matrix of kinship connections,

[18] Coxon and Jones, 'Multidimensional Scaling', p. 173; S. Wasserman and K. Faust, Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications, (Cambridge, 1994), p. 288.

[19] Borgatti, Everett and Freeman, Ucinet 4 Reference Manual, p. 135.

with attribute data about each node in the matrix. This procedure is used to measure homophily (preference for nodes with similar characteristics).[20]

Measures of density present problems for the historian who has data missing from a matrix of connections, because missing connections reduce the density figure. However, because kinship density in local communities is of considerable interest to historians, methods have been developed which enable historians to compare estimates of kinship density between communities. In his study of seven communities, Emmanuel Todd analysed first degree kinship links, and checked the results of this by using surname matches as a further indicator, in order to avoid the problem of only recognising a proportion of second and third degree kinship links in the evidence he had available.[21] Wrightson and Levine, in their studies of Terling and Whickham, followed a similar approach, but without the benefit of such informative household listings as had been available to Todd. They used the Hearth Tax listings of household heads, but the genealogical information had to be recovered from the Family Reconstitutions, and a miscellany of other references. Some of these links were more certain than others, and by including matching surnames as potential kinship links, Levine and Wrightson were able to create minimum and maximum estimates of kinship density.[22]

Todd's term 'relative kinship density' is the measure which is known as 'density', in social network analysis terminology. It is the number of actual connections in the matrix divided by the number of possible

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[20] Borgatti, Everett & Freeman, Ucinet 5.0 Version 1, On-line Help 'Tools> Statistics> Autocorrelation> Categorical. See A. Degenne and M. Forse, Introducing Social Networks, (London, 1999), pp. 32-33 for an explanation of homophily.

[21] Todd, 'Seven Peasant Communities', chapter 4.

[22] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, pp. 84-87; Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, pp. 322-5.

connections. Todd also uses the term 'absolute kinship density' to describe the number of kinship links the average family in his network would have. This is calculated by adding up the number of actual links in the network and by dividing this number by the number of nodes in the matrix. This is the measure of network activity known as 'degree' in social network analysis terminology.

Having described the methods used, I will now explain how these methods were applied to the Brancepeth data. In the network analysis which follows, the node is not an individual person. Each node is a family group of parents and unmarried children, as shown on an FRF produced by the Family Reconstitution. The nodes are identified by their FRF number, prefixed by a letter code, which stands for the township where they were living at the time the link was made. Because the families shown on FRFs can be traced over longer periods of time, living in particular villages or farms at different periods, other kinds of records can be matched to these families with greater accuracy.

Because this study uses historical evidence which cannot identify all the connections between the Family Reconstitution population, it was important to choose methods of analysis carefully. The opportunity to appraise an inventory or witness a will did not occur frequently. Although debts and credits listed in inventories provide material for network analysis, they do not record reciprocated loans paid off earlier in life, before the final reckoning of the inventory. Likewise, only some kinship links can be traced where they can be identified on the Family Reconstitution. The type of records available for this study made it unlikely that large cohesive subgroups would be found. After some experimentation with the various subgroup procedures available in Ucinet, it was decided that the two-clan would be most useful. Two-clans could

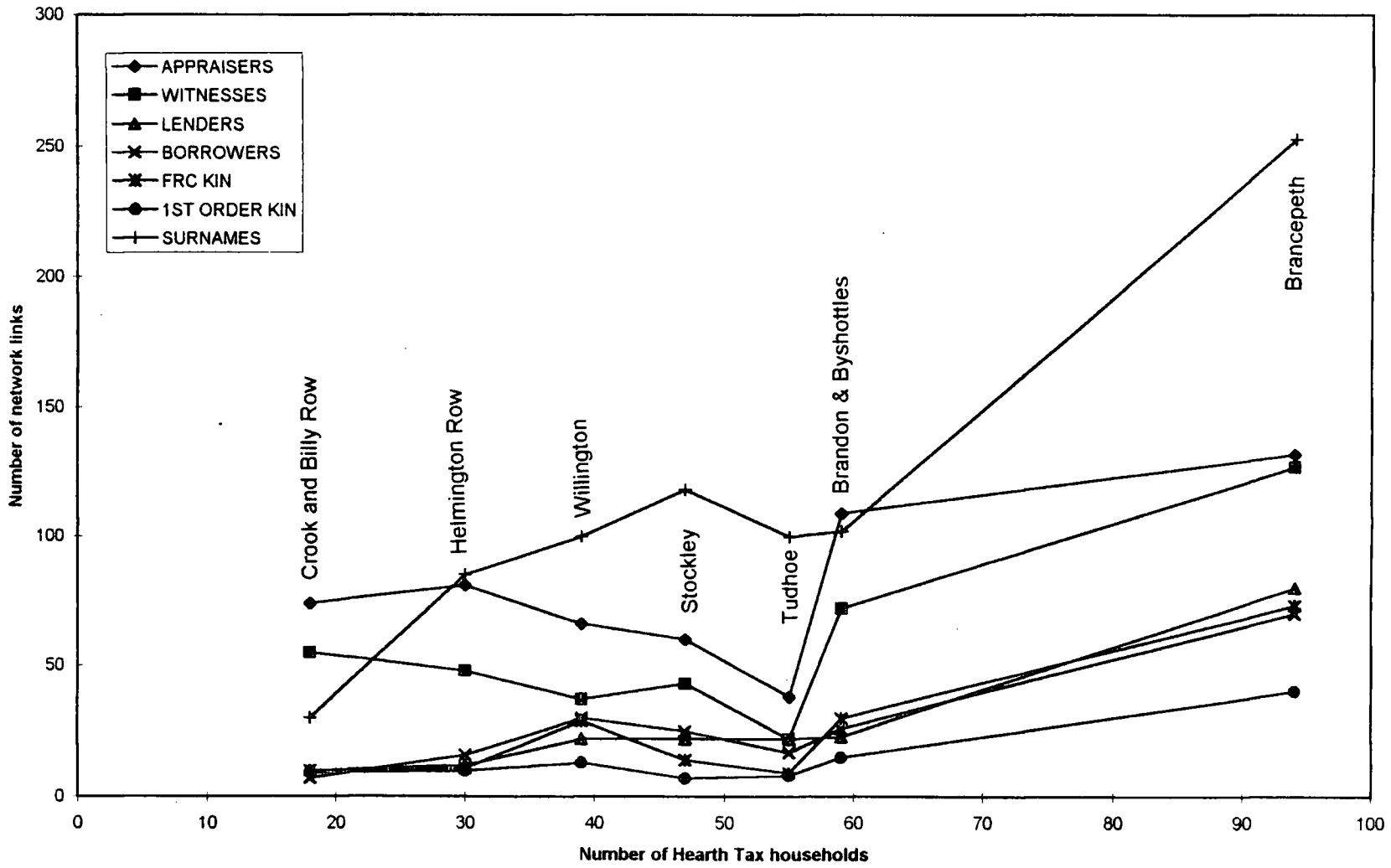
show friends of friends; in kinship terms, a family could be related to another family by the marriage of their respective offspring. Households who are related by an intermediary are normally on friendly terms, because it would put too much strain on the intermediary if there was conflict.[23] The identification of two-clans within the networks of connections in Brancepeth, with minimum group size of between five and eight families, can therefore identify subgroups of families who could be expected to be helpful to the other members of the group, if only out of respect for a mutual friend or kinship tie.

MDS was used to analyse links between townships, in order to compare the proximities of townships based on network links with their geographical proximities. Ucinet's Quadratic Assignment Procedure and the Autocategorical procedure were used to test the results of the subgroup analysis by subjecting each whole network to statistical analysis. The methods and terminologies used by Todd, and Wrightson and Levine in their calculations of kinship density have been used in this study.

Because of the amount of data available, the number of links in each network analysed varies between 102 and 788. In order to assess whether the surviving records of links between the Family Reconstitution families could be representative of the experiences of families living in different parts of Brancepeth parish, Figure 4.10 was produced. The number of links involving families from each township was calculated for each type of network analysed, and plotted against the number of households per township shown on the Hearth Tax assessments. The results are encouraging. Most of the townships are well-represented,

[23] Scott, Network Analysis, p. 12 explains this idea, which was raised by social psychologist F. Heider, in the 1940s.

Figure 4.10 Number of network links to township population



although Tudhoe seems to have disproportionately low numbers of links compared to the number of households in the township. This may be because the Family Reconstitution was less successful in Tudhoe, therefore fewer families can be traced with certainty. However, sufficient links are available from each township to suggest that people living in different parts of the parish are represented in the analysis which follows.

4.3 Honest neighbours?

The first kind of relationship to be analysed is that of the appraisers of inventories and their connections with the families of the deceased. When a householder, and sometimes when another family member died, an inventory of goods, debts and credits was drawn up, in order to help to administer the deceased person's estate. According to the statute of 1529, inventories had to be appraised by at least two men, within three months of death.[24] The appraisers were responsible for valuing the goods, and making sure that nothing had been taken away by relatives or friends before the goods were valued. They were also responsible for listing loans of money owed to the deceased, and money owed by the deceased where this was known about when the inventory was drawn up.

Appraisers are generally believed to have been neighbours.[25] If so, the men who performed this duty can be used to provide an insight into the social relationships of the family within the neighbourhood. An appraiser should be a credible trustworthy person, in order to assure the diocesan authorities that the estate was being properly valued, and to protect the property which was due to the family, creditors, and the

[24] K. Tiller, English Local History, (Stroud, 1992), p. 158.

[25] J. West, Village Records, (Chichester, 1982), p. 92.

recipients of bequests. However, goods may sometimes have been deliberately undervalued in probate inventories. A recent study of Darlington wills and inventories found that a widow was urged to accept an undervaluing of her husband's goods by a third of their real value.[26] Undervaluing may have benefited the family in cases where there may have been insufficient cash to pay all the creditors. In these situations, a balance had to be struck between the needs of the family, often a widow with children, and the needs of the creditors. Although it was difficult to prove, in Darlington, there were suggestions that a relative was among the appraisers in a number of cases.[27] The men whom the family wanted to appraise the goods might therefore be expected to be supportive neighbours, and possibly kin.

Occasionally one of the creditors joined the other appraisers, no doubt to protect his interests. In Darlington, creditors were found as appraisers in twelve of the fifty-seven inventories analysed.[28] Whether creditors, kin, family friends, or trusted neighbours, the persons appointed as appraisers had to be able to work together, in the deceased's home, with the executors of the will, who were usually the beneficiaries of the deceased's assets, at a time of family bereavement. Their responsibilities were to the family, the creditors, and the diocesan authorities. To strike the right balance they needed to be 'honest' (honourable) men, as they were described in some of the Darlington inventories, and also in the inventory of Henry White of Brancepeth, dated 1626.[29] In Darlington, two

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[26] J. A. Atkinson, B. Flynn, V. Portass, K. Singlehurst and H. J. Smith, (eds.) Darlington Wills and Inventories 1600 - 1625, Surtees Society, Vol. 201, (1993), p. 15.

[27] Atkinson, Flynn et al., Darlington Wills and Inventories, p. 18.

[28] Atkinson, Flynn, et al., Darlington Wills and Inventories, pp. 14, 18.

[29] Atkinson, Flynn et al., Darlington Wills and Inventories, pp. 58, 84, 110; DULASC, Inventory of Henry White of Brancepeth, 1626.

men were found appraising nine or more inventories, and fourteen men appraised five or more inventories; craftsmen appraised other craftsmen's goods.[30] These patterns of appraising may have reflected Darlington's role as a market town.[31]

In the countryside of Brancepeth, different criteria may have affected the appointment of appraisers. Although in Darlington, there appears to have been a group of regular appraisers, in the countryside more people may have undertaken the role. There appears to have been no requirement for all the appraisers to be literate. The names of the appraisers of the Brancepeth inventories are sometimes inscribed in the same hand, and at other times, a mark is substituted for the signature of one of the appraisers.

Producing an inventory was a fairly onerous responsibility, which provided little or no financial reward for the appraisers, unless they were creditors or kin who stood to inherit. There are normally no mentions in inventories of fees or expenses for appraisers, although one Brancepeth inventory mentions 8d. as the sum put aside for the appraisers' fees. As there were four appraisers involved, the 2d. fee could only be considered as out of pocket expenses. It seems likely that if neighbours performed this role, they did so out of a sense of obligation, perhaps respect for the dead, and consideration for the bereaved family, rather than for financial reward.

Neighbours should have been particularly suited to the task of appraising goods; if they were family friends, they were likely to have

[30] Atkinson, Flynn et al., Darlington Wills and Inventories, p. 18.

[31] Atkinson, Flynn et al., Darlington Wills and Inventories, p. 1.

been regular visitors in the home, to know what items of furniture, household equipment etc. belonged to the deceased. The appraisers of one of the Brancepeth inventories describe themselves as 'being of the neighbourhood'.[32] The location of appraisers, compared to the families of the deceased, may therefore indicate the geographical extent of the 'neighbourhood'. In this situation, the phrase "of the neighbourhood" could refer to the larger community of the parish, or to a much smaller area.

The criteria for the choice of appraisers could turn out to be a sensitive indicator of differences between communities. In the market town of Darlington, the relationships between appraisers and the families of the deceased may reflect the commercial nature of that community. In a more self-sufficient smallholding rural community, fulfilling the role of an appraiser may have been one of the expected traditional obligations of neighbourhood.

There were 116 of the Brancepeth inventories where the deceased could be traced on the Family Reconstitution. Most of these listed between two and four appraisers; sixty-eight per cent of these appraisers could also be traced to FRFs produced by the Family Reconstitution. A further twenty-six per cent of appraisers had Brancepeth surnames, but could not be traced unambiguously on the Family Reconstitution, probably because they were old people at the start of the reconstitution, and are therefore not included in the reconstituted families, or they were not married householders, or they were kin who were living outside the parish. Only six per cent of appraisers' surnames were unfamiliar in Brancepeth. However, as there was normally no other information to help to trace

[32] DULASC, Inventory of John Jackson of Helmington Row, 1660.

these people, only the appraisers who could be matched to an FRF from the Family Reconstitution were included in the analysis which follows.

The families of the appraisers and the families of the deceased persons (identified by their FRF numbers) formed a matrix of 252 nodes. The matrix was created as a symmetrical matrix, showing connections between the families as reciprocal, rather than directed, based on the belief that the relationships between appraisers and the deceased's family were likely to be mutually supportive, a matter of community obligation and goodwill, rather than an exploitative relationship.

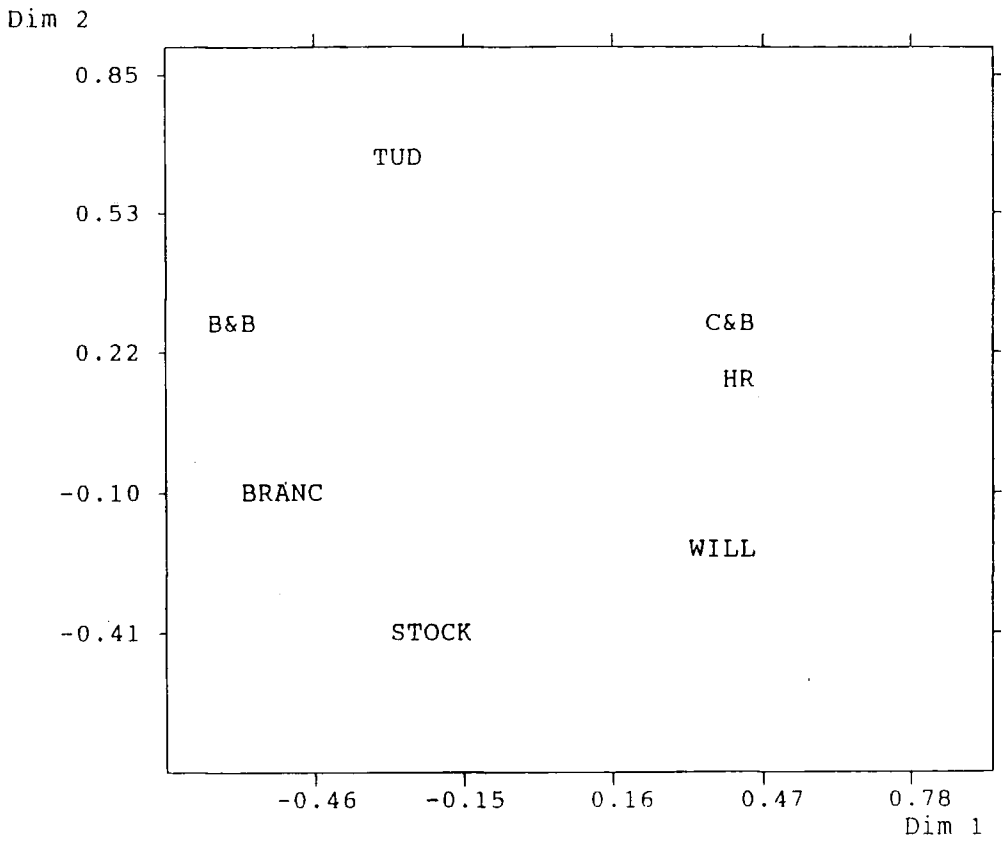
Firstly, the number of links between and within townships were calculated. Table 4.1 shows the results. The most obvious conclusion which can be drawn from Table 4.1 is that links within the township predominate in all of the seven townships within the parish. Appraisers were normally neighbours within the township. However, links between townships are also interesting. Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row have twenty-two links between them, in comparison to Brancepeth, whose highest number of links to other townships is fifteen, with nearby Brandon and Byshottles. Stockley, although with its main centre of population geographically closest to Brancepeth village, has only nine links with Brancepeth township. Figure 4.11 shows the proximities of the townships based on the matrix of connections shown in Table 4.1. The co-ordinates of the township names have been plotted as an MDS diagram. The results shown in Figure 4.11 were based on the lowest stress, and compared well with the layout of township names on other diagrams using a random starting configuration which had the same stress level.

In Figure 4.11, Brancepeth township is shown close to Brandon and Byshottles, and Stockley. Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row

Table 4.1 Links between the families of appraisers and the families of the deceased

Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	99	15	4	3	9	1	1	132
Brandon & Byshottles	15	83	4	0	1	4	2	109
Crook & Billy Row	4	4	38	22	1	0	5	74
Helmington Row	3	0	22	39	3	1	13	81
Stockley	9	1	1	3	41	0	5	60
Tudhoe	1	4	0	1	0	32	0	38
Willington	1	2	5	13	5	0	40	66
TOTALS	132	109	74	81	60	38	66	560

Figure 4.11 MDS diagram of inter-township links between the families of appraisers and the families of the deceased



Stress = 0.170 in 2 dimensions.

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UCINET IV 1.63/X Copyright 1991-1995 by Analytic Technologies.

are placed very close to each other, because they are closely interconnected in this network. Willington is also fairly close to Helmington Row. Stockley is placed at the opposite end of the 'map' to Tudhoe, because Stockley and Tudhoe have no connections in this network. Tudhoe is clearly 'out on a limb', its closest connections being to Brandon and Byshottles. This 'map', although not orientated north, does bear a close resemblance to the physical arrangements of townships, as shown in Figure 4.1. The closest relationship shown on the MDS diagram is between Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row. These were both predominantly upland areas, in the west of the parish. It is tempting to speculate that, in townships with small populations, such as Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row, families might have had proportionately more contacts with neighbouring townships than families who lived in the townships which had larger populations. However, on the basis of the evidence so far provided, this must remain a speculation. Nevertheless, one thing stands out from the analysis; although most appraisers were neighbours living in the same township, a certain amount of choice seems to have been exercised in the appointment of appraisers. The nearest neighbours did not automatically step in; if this had been the case, all appraisers would have been neighbours within the same township.

The networks of appraisers could indicate subgroups of mutually-supportive families within the parish, possibly clustered in the neighbourhood of the township. To explore this possibility, the network of appraiser relationships was examined for cohesive subgroups. Subgroups were defined as having at least eight member families, all of whom were connected to each other directly, or by no more than one intermediary (the two-clan or two-clique). Five cohesive subgroups were found, as

illustrated in Figures 4.12 to 4.16. The nodes and connections are shown using the circle diagram display format produced by Krackplot.[33]

Group one is mostly made up of connections within Crook and Billy Row and Helmington Row, with a single connection to Willington and a single connection to Tudhoe. Although most of the interconnections are through the intermediary family labelled HR40499, the Jacksons of Helmington Row, there are other families elsewhere in the subgroup who are connected to more than one of the other group members. This subgroup shows a cohesive core of families in Crook and Billy Row and Helmington Row. William Jackson's household, at the centre of this subgroup, farmed just over 20 acres in 1607.[34] He acted as an appraiser on four occasions within this subgroup, and in none of these situations was he a creditor. However, William Iley (W86) and John Sickerwham (HR40795) were creditors of William Jackson when they acted as appraisers of his inventory in 1620.

All but one of the members of the second subgroup (Figure 4.13) lived in Brancepeth township. The family labelled B61, headed by Henry White, appears to have been the main intermediary, but B242, (William Thompson's household) were also well-connected to other families in the subgroup. The main intermediary, the Whites (B61) were cottagers; William Thompson's inventory was valued at only £33. 16s. 6d. in 1625. However, two householders from this subgroup, (B203 and B40649) were among the leading tenants who led the complaints against Sanderson in

[33] Krackhardt, Lundberg and O'Rourke, 'Krackplot'.

[34] PRO, LR/2/192, Survey of Brancepeth 1607.

Figure 4.12 Two-clans showing links between appraisers and the families of the deceased (group 1)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

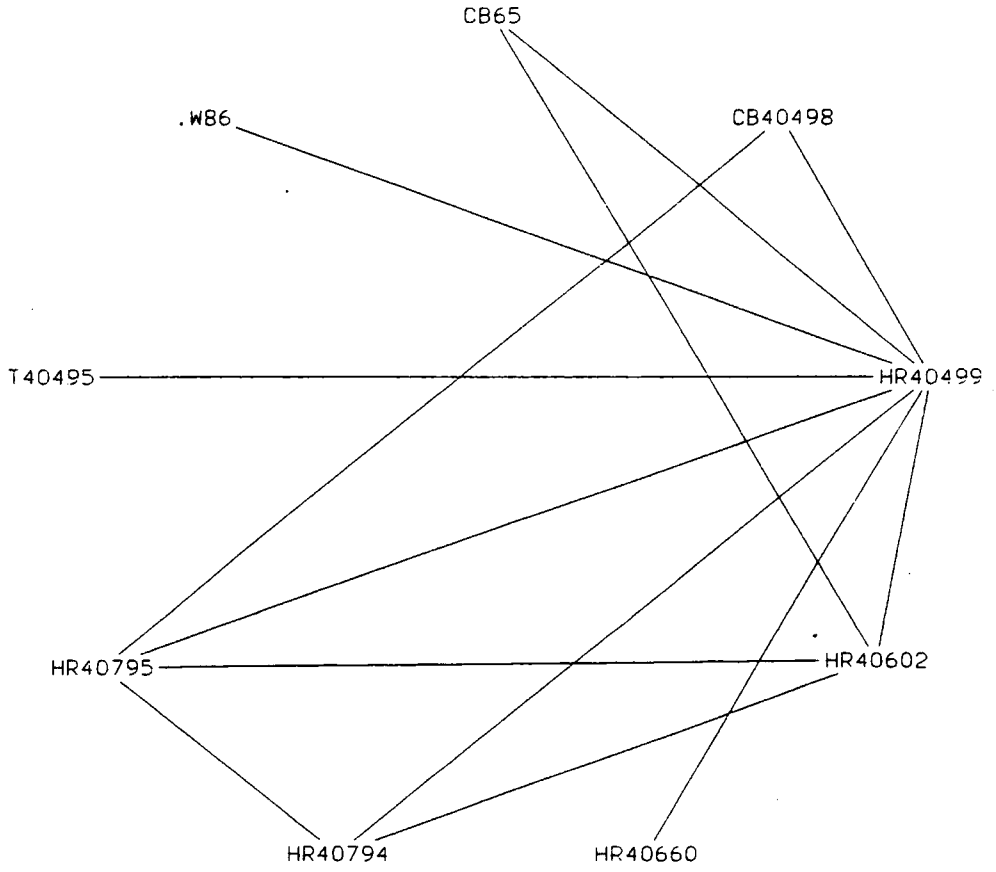


Figure 4.13 Two-clans showing links between appraisers and the families of the deceased (group 2)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

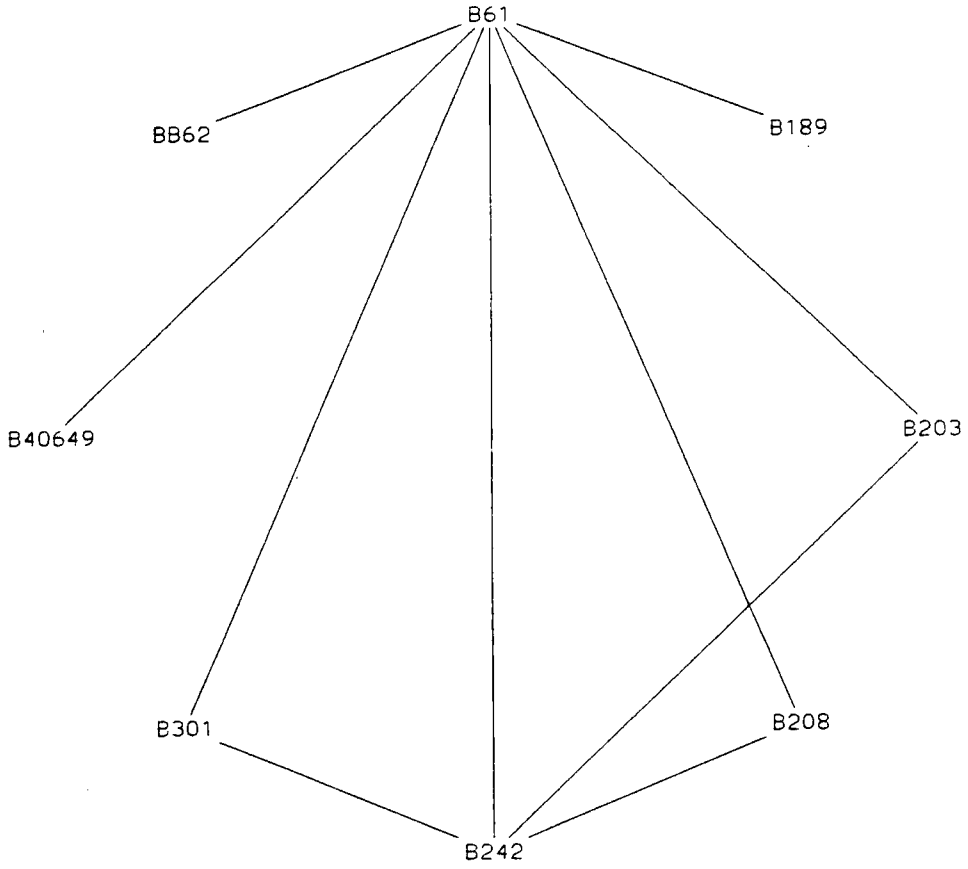


Figure 4.14 Two-clans showing links between appraisers and the families of the deceased (group 3)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

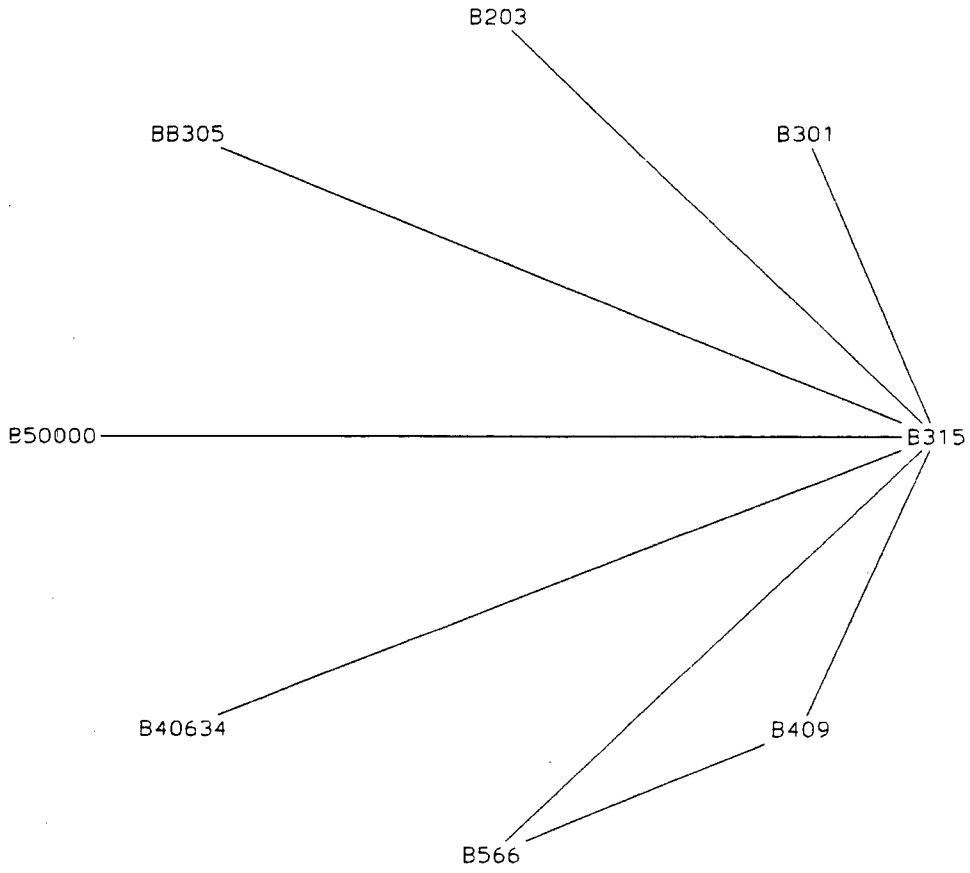


Figure 4.15 Two-clans showing links between appraisers and the families of the deceased (group 4)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

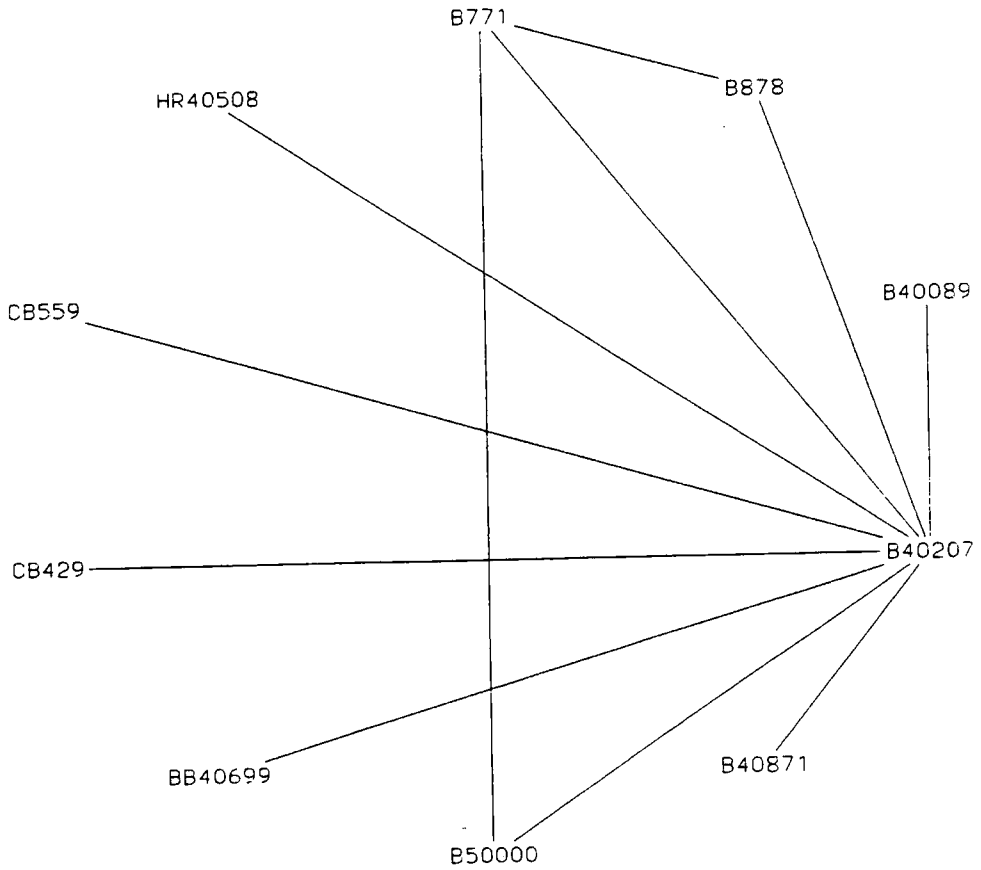
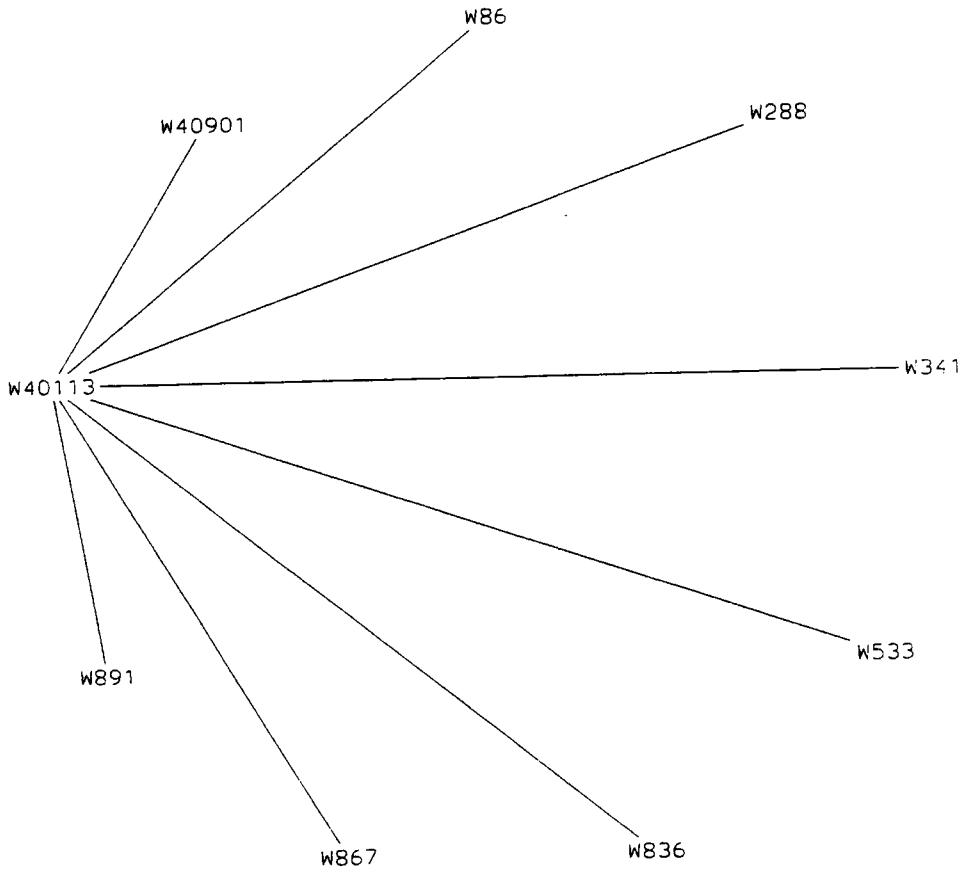


Figure 4.16 Two-clans showing links between appraisers and the families of the deceased (group 5)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



1614. One of these families, (B40649), headed by Bartholomew Musgrave, held two tenancies in 1607, amounting to over fifty acres.[35]

The third group (Figure 4.14) is also made up of mainly Brancepeth families, and is almost completely dependent on family B315 (Mr Thomas Atkinson) for cohesion. This was the only family of gentry status in the subgroup. Only some of the members of group four (Figure 4.15) were from Brancepeth; the family of Mr Thomas Conyers of Wooley (B40207) acted as the main intermediary. Conyers was a regular appraiser of inventories between 1660 and 1670, despite being reported as a recusant in 1669.[36] Perhaps his gentry status and standing as the son of the bailiff William Conyers was more significant. The connections of Thomas Conyers are in Crook and Billy Row, Helmington Row, and Brandon and Byshottles. Living at Wooley, and being able to afford a horse, may explain these connections. Group five (Figure 4.16) is completely confined to Willington, all the families are connected to the Brack family (W40113). The appraisers of both Nicholas Brack and his wife's inventory were included. Interestingly, different appraisers were used for each inventory.

Figure 4.17 shows the interconnections between the five cohesive two-clans with at least eight member families. There are some families which are members of more than one subgroup, such as W86, (the Iley family of The Burn, situated between Willington and Helmington Row), B203 (the family of George White who was one of the leaders in the 1614 complaints against Sanderson), and B50000 (the Middletons of Brancepeth).

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[35] DCRO, D/Br/E44, Inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614; PRO, LR/2/192.

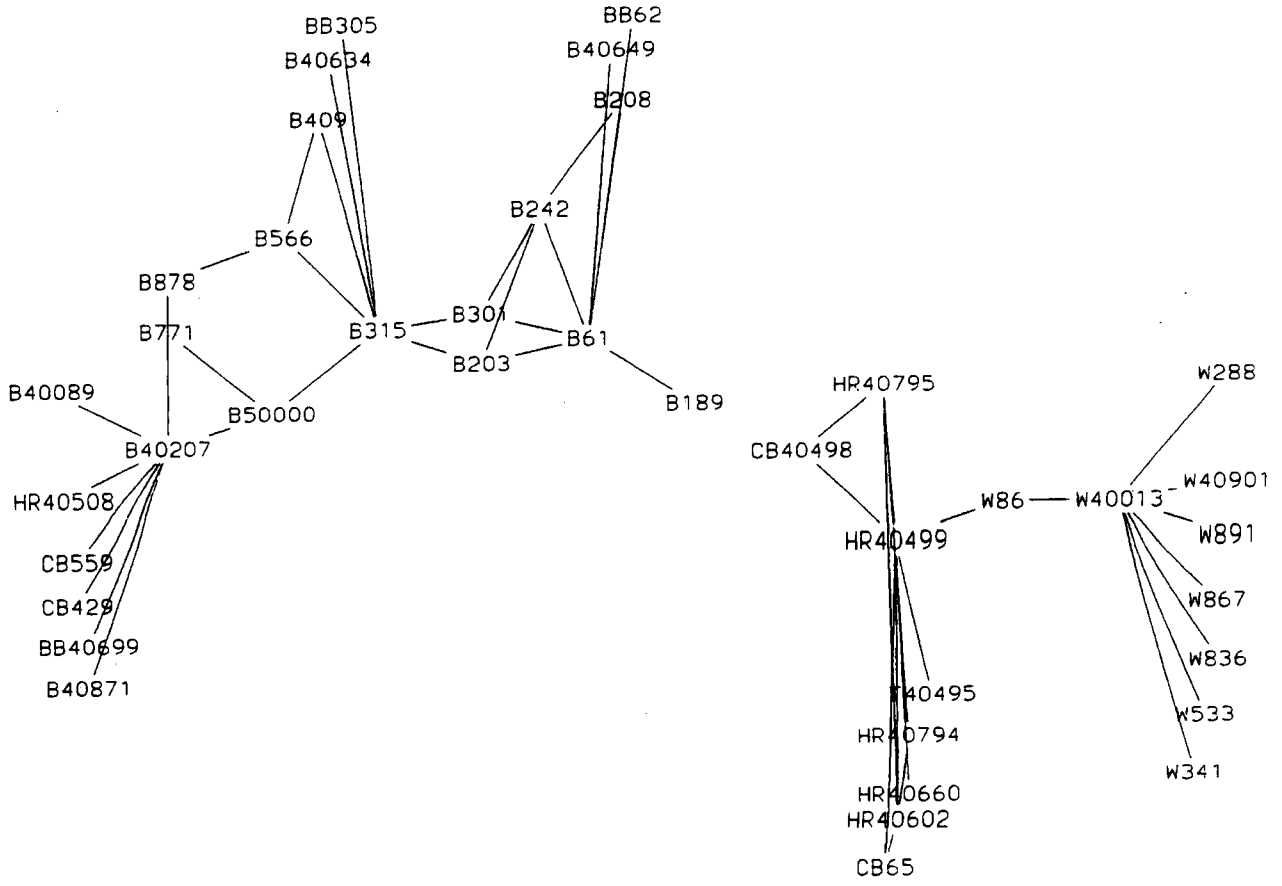
[36] DUASC, Post Dissolution Muniments Box 30 item 29, Non-conformist meeting certificates and reports.

Figure 4.17 The connections between the five groups of two-clans showing links between the families of appraisers and the families of the deceased

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



The Brancepeth township subgroups have a more complex structure than the Willington group which is essentially a star of connections centring on the Brack family (W40013). The complexity of inter-relationships within the Brancepeth townships subgroups is what could be expected in a larger population. These initial findings show that the Brancepeth families analysed were not in completely self-contained separate factions.

These subgroups illustrate that within the township, fairly cohesive subgroups of neighbours can be found, at least in Brancepeth, Willington, and in the combined township area of Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row. Considering that the opportunities for directly reciprocating the obligation of appraising an inventory were strictly limited, usually to the spouse of the deceased, some of these subgroups are quite cohesive. However, as in group one, these relationships of assistance could be reciprocated indirectly among a group of neighbours. William Jackson (HR40499) appraised Cuthbert Jackson's inventory (CB40498) with John Sickerwham, (HR40795). John Sickerwham later appraised William Jackson's inventory.

Appraisers of inventories in Brancepeth appear to be mostly neighbours of the deceased. This role seems to have been adopted by neighbours of various social status, but the gentry do not seem to have had an unusually large role in this process. There are no dominant names amongst the appraisers, and in the subgroups discussed, only two were found to be creditors. This proportion can be compared to thirty-six inventories matched to the Family Reconstitution which showed both appraisers and creditors. Fourteen of these inventories contained a creditor among the appraisers. The small number of creditors found among the subgroups of appraisers could be an indication that the

subgroups are more representative of friendship or kinship relationships than appraisers in general. These potentially supportive groups were concentrated in the neighbourhoods of the townships.

4.4 Will witnesses

Wills were usually made shortly before death.[37] Wills of the seventeenth century tend to be written in quite simple language, itemising specific sums of money as bequests, and mentioning items of clothing and other treasured belongings. It would have been difficult to draw up a will earlier in life because an individual's assets could change quite considerably over the years. For these reasons, most wills which survive appear to have been written when the testator was sick. However, there were also dangers in leaving it too long before making a will; for the will to be valid, a testator had to be 'in sound mind'.[38] Where possible, wills were properly written out, signed or marked by the testator, and witnessed by at least three other people. Where the progression of the sickness was less certain, or faster than expected, some wills were made nuncupatively, and were essentially verbal expressions of intent, witnessed by those who heard them, then written out as a memorandum for the purposes of probate.[39]

Wrightson, writing about his study of Terling, observed that 'the witnesses of wills were overwhelmingly neighbours - only some five per cent being known to have been kin', and that 'some of these neighbours were a very personal choice and were referred to elsewhere in wills or

[37] D. Cressy, Birth, Marriage and Death, (Oxford, 1997), p. 393; S. Coppel, 'Willmaking on the Deathbed', Local Population Studies, No. 40, (1988).

[38] A. Tarver, Church Court Records, (Chichester, 1995) p. 57.

[39] Tarver, Church Court Records, p. 57.

were designated as friends. Others appear to have been particularly prestigious neighbours and recur in many wills'.[40] In Elizabethan Whickham, Levine and Wrightson found that the clergy were witnesses to two thirds of the wills.[41] The role of the clergy in Whickham as will witnesses may have been due to the diligence of particular clergy, but may also be an indicator of the kind of society which had grown up in Whickham; a society where kinship ties were low, and where the casual nature of the mining work available made long-standing neighbourly relationships a rarity.

Wills made in unusual circumstances were sometimes contested by other possible beneficiaries in the ecclesiastical court. These Consistory Court cases provide useful evidence about the witnesses of wills, and their relationships with the deceased's household. Christopher Marsh investigated forty disputed will cases from all over the country, and concluded that testators deliberately and carefully selected friends and neighbours to act as witnesses.[42] Spufford and Takahashi investigated the relative economic status of testators and will witnesses and concluded that testators in Willingham and Chippenham were not confining their choices of witness to people who were of a similar economic level to themselves. They conclude that 'poorer kin and villagers from the labouring section of village society were summoned to the deathbeds of their more prosperous relations and neighbours, as well as the other way

[40] K. Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English Village: Terling Essex 1500-1700,' in R. M. Smith, (ed.), Land, Kinship and Life-cycle, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 330.

[41] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, pp. 291-2.

[42] C. Marsh, 'In the name of God? Will-making and faith in early modern England', in G. H. Martin, and P. Spufford, (eds), The Records of the Nation, (Woodbridge, 1990), p. 233.

round.' and that 'Relationships continued to matter'.[43] Their investigation of the role of will witnesses suggests that these connections could be an important key to some of the supportive relationships seventeenth-century families had established in their local communities.

A number of disputed will cases survive from seventeenth-century Brancepeth. The first case we will consider exemplifies the problems of making a will years before death. Thomas Douthwaite was an elderly man who by 1630 had been living in his brother Ralph's house in Willington for the last twenty years or so. He had made a will when he was ill in 1626, but he had subsequently recovered. Following his recovery, he had supposedly wished to change his will, to give more to the children of his other brother, William Douthwaite of Brancepeth, in view of the expenses William Douthwaite had been forced to spend because his adult children had to appear at the Quarter Sessions after a violent incident in Brancepeth. Uncle Thomas had allegedly made verbal declarations of this intention to the curate of Brancepeth, when walking together to Durham to attend the Quarter Sessions hearing, and had asked him to write a new will for him. The curate of Brancepeth had not done this, and being illiterate, Uncle Thomas was unable to write his new will for himself. When lying on his death bed less than a month later, Thomas Douthwaite sent for Robert Thompson, the curate of Witton-le-Wear, and asked him to bring George Bradley, and 'to bring pen ink and paper with them'. George Bradley lived at Etherley, near Witton-le Wear, and in his deposition George Bradley said that 'the testator Thomas Douthwaite, in his lifetime and best health, and this examinate (meaning himself, George Bradley), were intimate and kind the one to the other'. Unfortunately, by

[43] M. Spufford and M. Takahashi, 'Families, Will Witnesses, and Economic Structure in the Fens and on the Chalk: Sixteenth-and-Seventeenth-Century Willingham and Chippenham,' Albion, Vol. 28, (1996), p. 399.

the time Thompson and Bradley arrived, Thomas Douthwaite was too ill, not in 'perfect mind or memory, neither able to speak', according to Thompson. Because Thomas Douthwaite had already made a written will, his verbally declared will was not valid.

The circumstances in which the first will was made were also investigated by the court. One of the witnesses, Martin Nicholson, from Willington, described how he had been sent for by Thomas Douthwaite, who was 'sick and infirm', and asked to come back the next day to be a witness, because Thomas was going to send for Mr William Conyers so that he could make a will. When Nicholson returned the next day he found Mr Conyers there with 'divers others'. The will was actually written by the schoolmaster, Abraham Earnshaw, and witnessed by Martin Nicholson, William Conyers, William Shaw, George Markendale and John Markendale. In the Consistory Court case, William Conyers described himself as 'the kind friend and ancient acquaintance' of the testator. He was, of course, also the bailiff of the Brancepeth Lordship. William Shaw, from Byers Green in Auckland parish, was the brother-in-law of William Douthwaite, as Ralph Douthwaite was quick to point out in his evidence at the Consistory Court hearing.[44] The Markendales were not summonsed to give evidence in the court case, and as they do not appear on the Family Reconstitution, little can be ascertained about them, except that the only Markendales to appear on the spare burials file lived at Willington, in the early seventeenth century. In the case of Thomas Douthwaite, when making his written will in 1626, he chose a friend to witness it, as well as a man who was distant kin by marriage (affinal kin) and at least one

[44] This evidence all comes from the depositions in this case; DULASC, DDR/V12, Durham Consistory Court Depositions 1604-34, fols. 176-177, 193 verso - 194 verso, 201-202, 217 verso - 218, 226 verso.

unrelated neighbour. (The Durham Consistory Court depositions state whether the witness is or is not related to any of the parties in the case.)

The second case involves a nuncupative will, this time made where no written will existed. In 1625, Thomas Pickering of Stockley, according to the deposition of Joanna Wilson, a 25-year old servant to George Bell, the testator, 'being a neighbor came into her said Maisters house to see how he did, and findeinge him sicke in a chaire, asked him if he had made his will'. Robert Fawdon, also of Stockley also gave evidence,

> 'being bothe neighbor and cosen German once removed to George Bell mentoned in this allegation, did divers and sundrie tymes repaire unto and visit the said George Bell in [th]e time of his sicknes and moved him to settle his maies and estate for avoydinge of suite and troubles amongst his friendes after his death'.

Robert Fawdon was such a distant relative that he was unlikely to have any financial interest in the matter; Thomas Pickering admitted to being 'somewhat of kindred to the party' but could not determine the degree. As George Bell appears to have had very little to leave his wife and child, and also had a brother living, neither of his sick visitors were likely to have urged him to make a will from selfish motives. They were neighbours, who were also distant kin, and seemed to be regular visitors, offering companionship and sensible advice in the time of George's illness. Thomas Pickering and Joanna Wilson (the servant) were the official witnesses of the nuncupative will.[45]

[45] DULASC, DDR/V12, fols. 40-40 verso, 46-46 verso, Will of George Bell of Stockley, 1626.

The third case also involves a nuncupative will. William Bussie of The Burn in Willington, in 1628 stated that he

> 'being both a kinsman and neighbour to the articulate Martin Jackson was att his house att Helmden Row articulate when his sonne John Jackson articulate lay sick upon the sickness whereof he died who lyeing upon his death bedd about two dayes next before his death being of good and perfect mynd and memorie did by worde of mouthe make and declare his last will and testament'.

The other evidence was given by Ralph Douthwaite, John Jackson's brother-in-law, who stated that he 'was wth him the said John in the time of his sickness'.[46] The two witnesses of the nuncupative will were William Bussy and Ralph Douthwaite.[47] These cases suggest that the witnesses of wills in Brancepeth were regular visitors, sometimes close friends of the testator, sometimes distant kin, and often neighbours.

One hundred and thirteen Brancepeth wills were used for the network analysis of will witnesses. These were the wills which could be traced to the Family Reconstitution FRFs. Most named between two and four witnesses, producing a total of 334 witnesses, out of which four had to be disregarded as illegible. (Many of the will witnesses in Brancepeth had to make a mark, and someone else wrote their name; others could

[46] DULASC, DDR V/12 fols.102-102 verso.

[47] DULASC, Will of John Jackson of Helmington Row, 1628.

only write their name with the greatest of difficulty, sometimes resulting in an illegible signature). Of the 330 witnesses who remained in the sample, 121 (thirty-seven per cent) were not traceable with confidence to the Family Reconstitution FRFs, although ninety of these untraceables had familiar Brancepeth surnames. However, 209 witnesses could be traced to the Family Reconstitution FRFs, and therefore were included in the analysis. Of the 209 witnesses, a number acted as witnesses more than once. However, the maximum number of times any of the individuals from a particular FRF acted as a witness in the analysis which follows was five times. One of these was the curate, Nicholas Cockey, but there is no other evidence of the clergy taking a leading role in witnessing wills in Brancepeth.

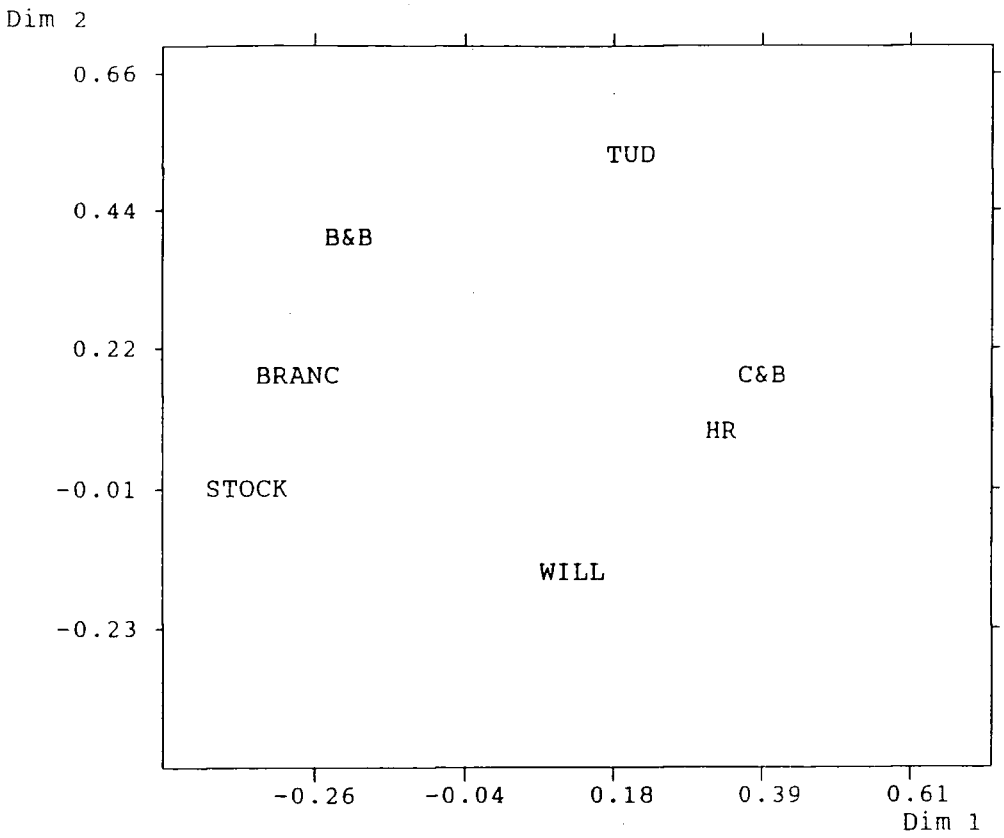
The families of testators and will witnesses produced a matrix of 215 nodes, producing a total of 404 connections between the family groups represented by FRFs. The relationship between the testator and will witness was seen to be a relationship of friendship, and therefore the matrix was set up as symmetrical, rather than as a directional matrix. Firstly, a count was made of the number of connections which could be traced within the townships and between the townships. Table 4.2 shows the figures produced by this process. Clearly, most will-witnesses were from the same township as the testator whose will they witnessed. However, links between townships are also of interest. Figure 4.18 shows the MDS map of the relative social distance between townships based on links between witnesses and testators.

Helmington Row is shown close to Crook and Billy Row. Willington is also fairly close to Helmington Row, though further away from Crook and Billy Row. Brancepeth is shown between Stockley and Brandon and Byshottles, at the other side of the map, and Tudhoe is in an isolated

Table 4.2 Links between the families of testators and the families of will witnesses

Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	101	10	2	2	10	1	1	127
Brandon & Byshottles	10	52	3	1	2	1	3	72
Crook & Billy Row	2	3	38	10	0	0	2	55
Helmington Row	2	1	10	26	0	3	6	48
Stockley	10	2	0	0	28	0	3	43
Tudhoe	1	1	0	3	0	17	0	22
Willington	1	3	2	6	3	0	22	37
TOTALS	127	72	55	48	43	22	37	404

Figure 4.18 MDS diagram of inter-township links between the families of will witnesses and the families of testators



Stress = 0.169 in 2 dimensions.

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UCINET IV 1.63/X Copyright 1991-1995 by Analytic Technologies.

position, reflecting the small number of connections from Tudhoe to the rest of the parish. Like the MDS map based on appraiser relationships, the diagram bears a strong resemblance to the geographical layout of the townships of the parish, as shown in Figure 4.1. The Brancepeth testators in this survey appear to prefer people who live in the same township, and people from nearby townships as witnesses for their wills.

In the same way as the appraiser network was subjected to analysis for cohesive subgroups, the will witness network was searched for groups of at least six families who were all related to each other by no more than one intermediary (two-clans). Nine groups of families were discovered, as shown in Figures 4.19 - 4.27. Groups three to nine are only held together because of one family. Groups one and two are made up of almost the same composition of nodes; there are five families which appear in both subgroups. These subgroups show more interrelationships between different group members; they are both dominated by Brancepeth families. The rest of the groups, which are held together by one central family, have members from different townships. Group three is centred on the Hackforths of Morley (B108); Lancelot's inventory was worth nearly £300 in 1619. Some of his connections were with neighbouring farms, whose tenants could also be described as better off; the Hulls at West Brandon, with over thirty acres in 1607 (BB40467), and the family of Anthony Farrow of Littlewhite (B208), whose inventory was worth over £300. The fourth group is centred on the family of Nicholas Cockey (B40183), the curate of Brancepeth, who could be expected to have connections all over the parish, and to be a regular sick visitor. Group five is centred on Stephen Cockey, who was the parish clerk in the 1650s. Group six, centred on the Hulls of Hill House (BB40019), has members from neighbouring farms, the Briggs from Hareholme (BB227) and the Richardsons from Biggin (BB681). Only group seven has

Figure 4.19 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 1)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

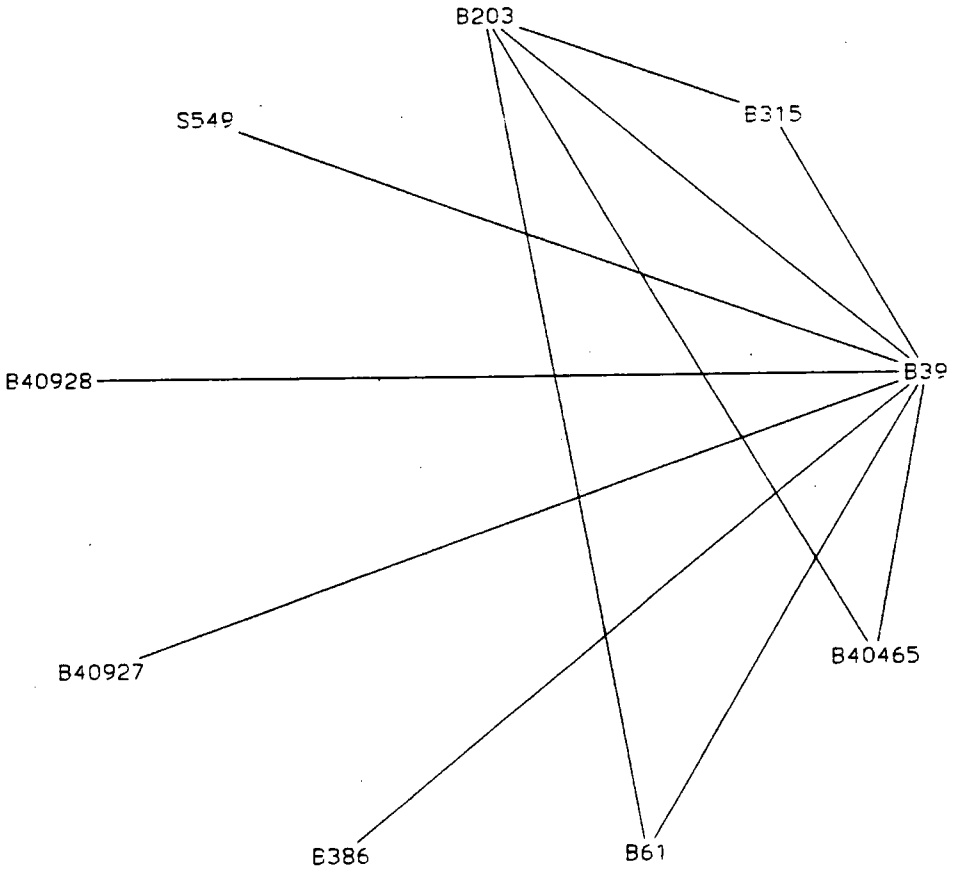


Figure 4.20 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 2)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

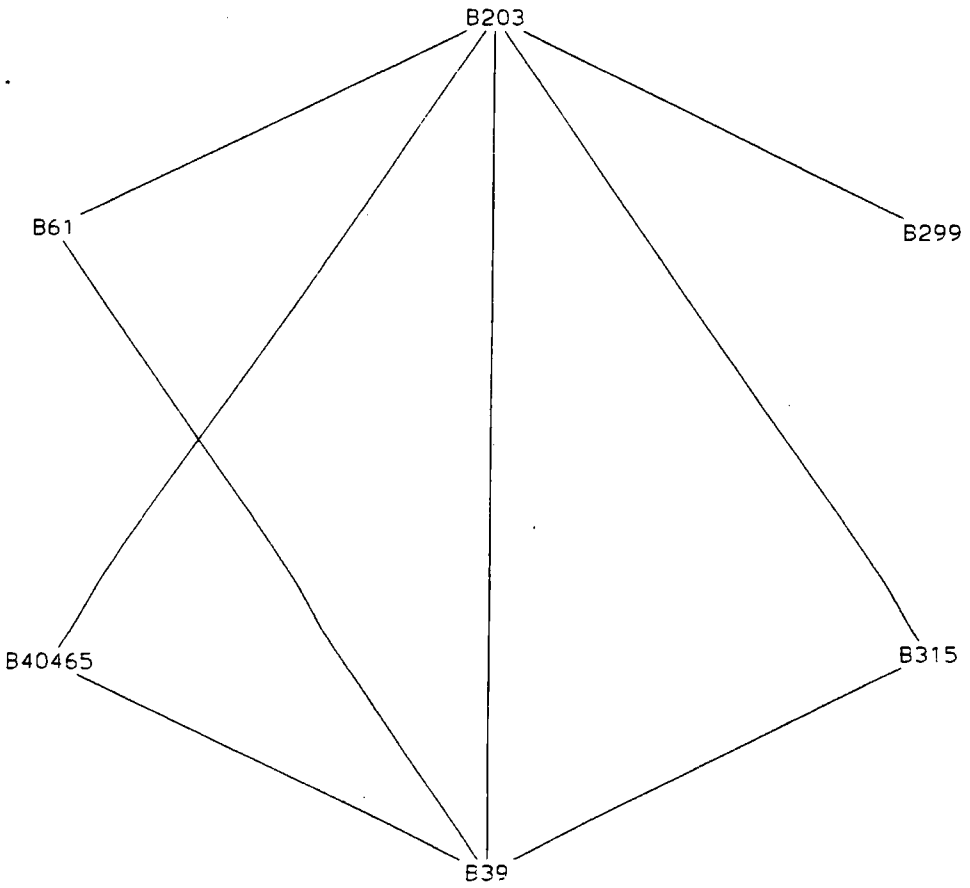


Figure 4.21 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 3)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

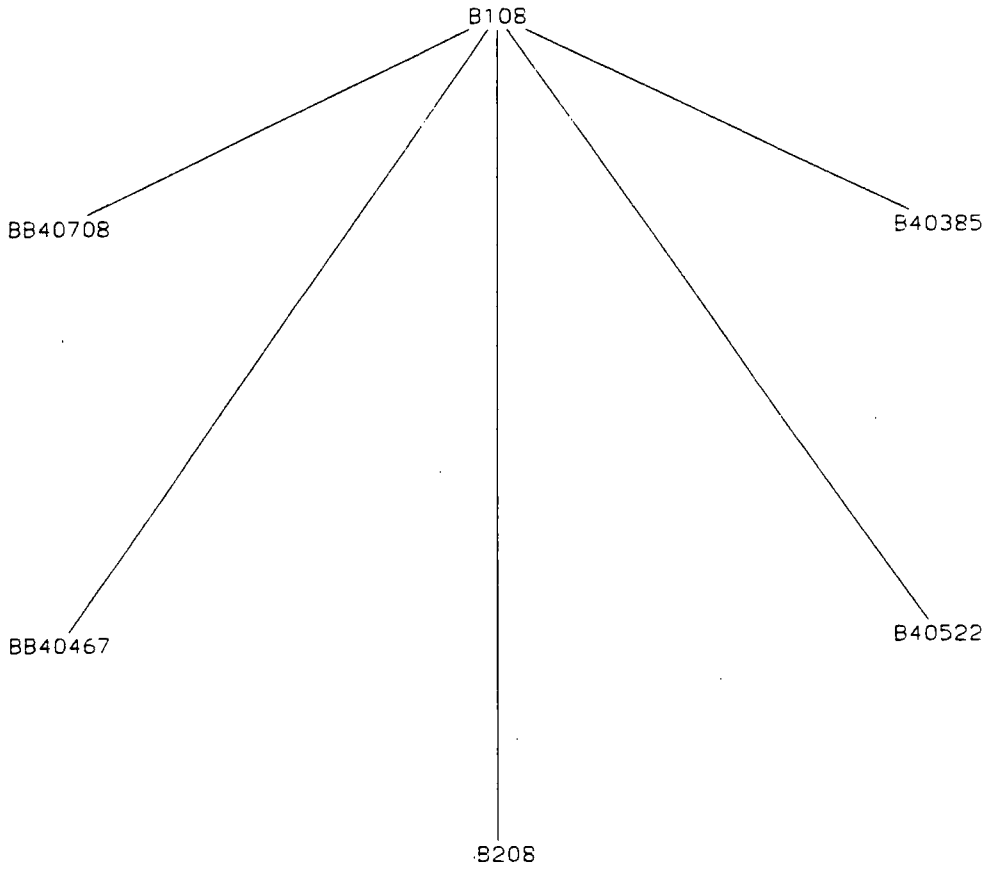


Figure 4.22 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 4)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

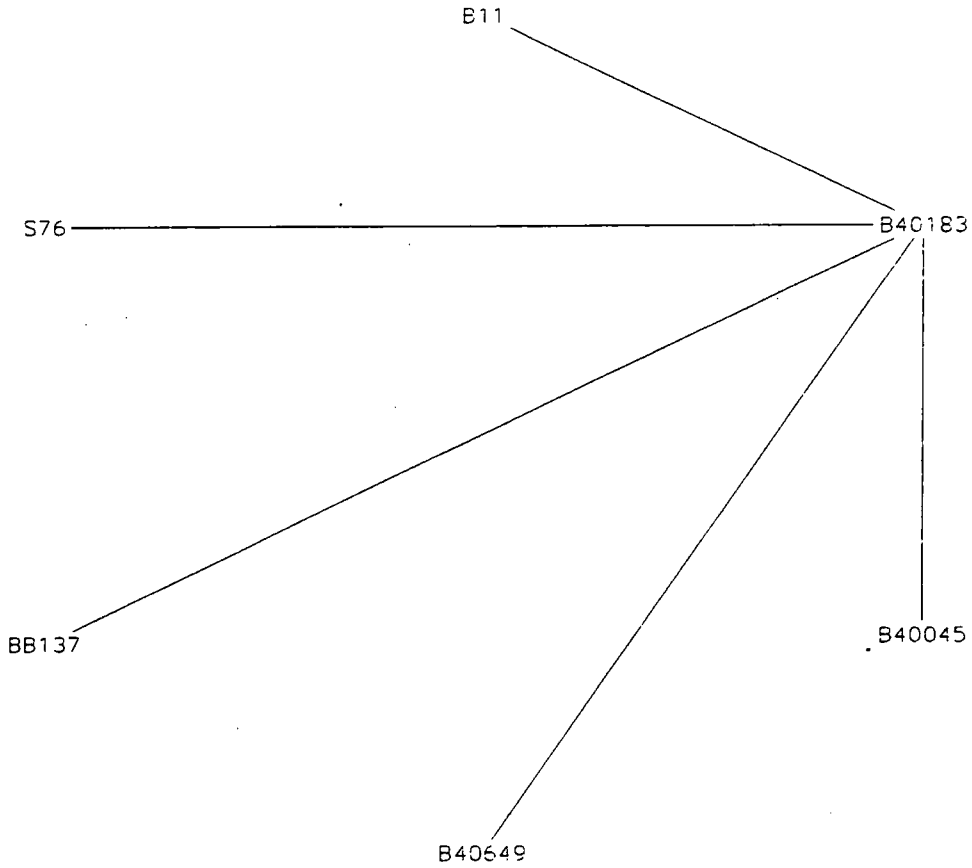


Figure 4.23 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 5)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

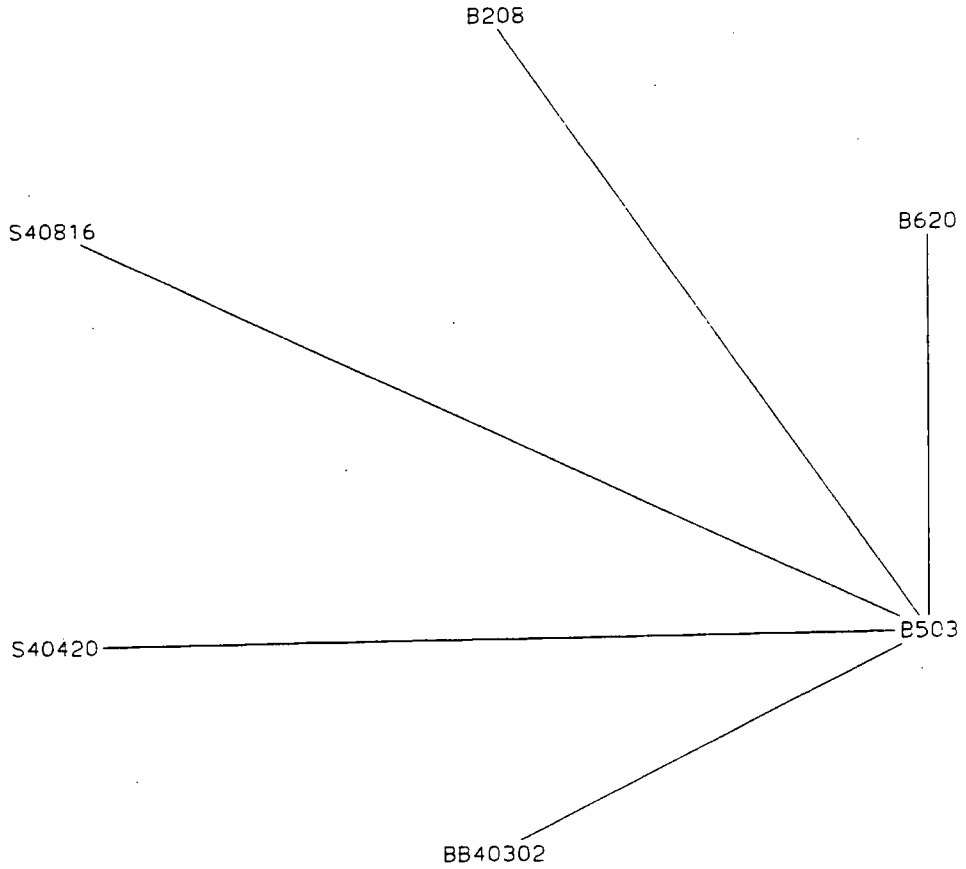


Figure 4.24 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 6)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

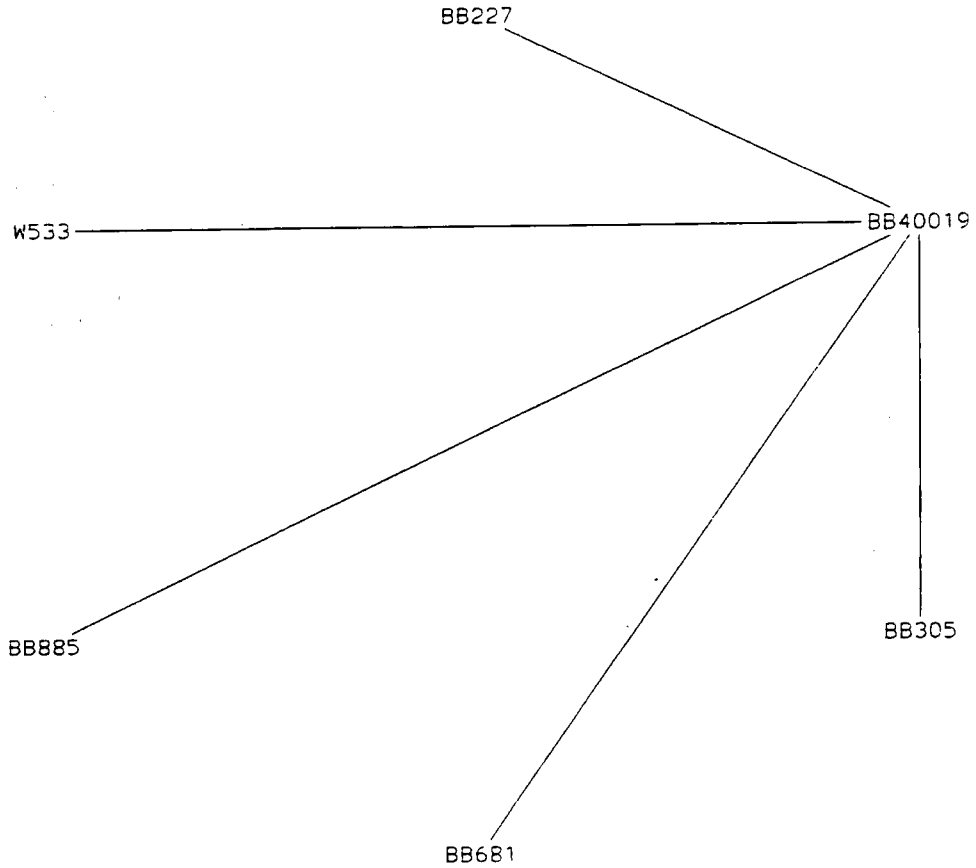


Figure 4.25 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 7)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

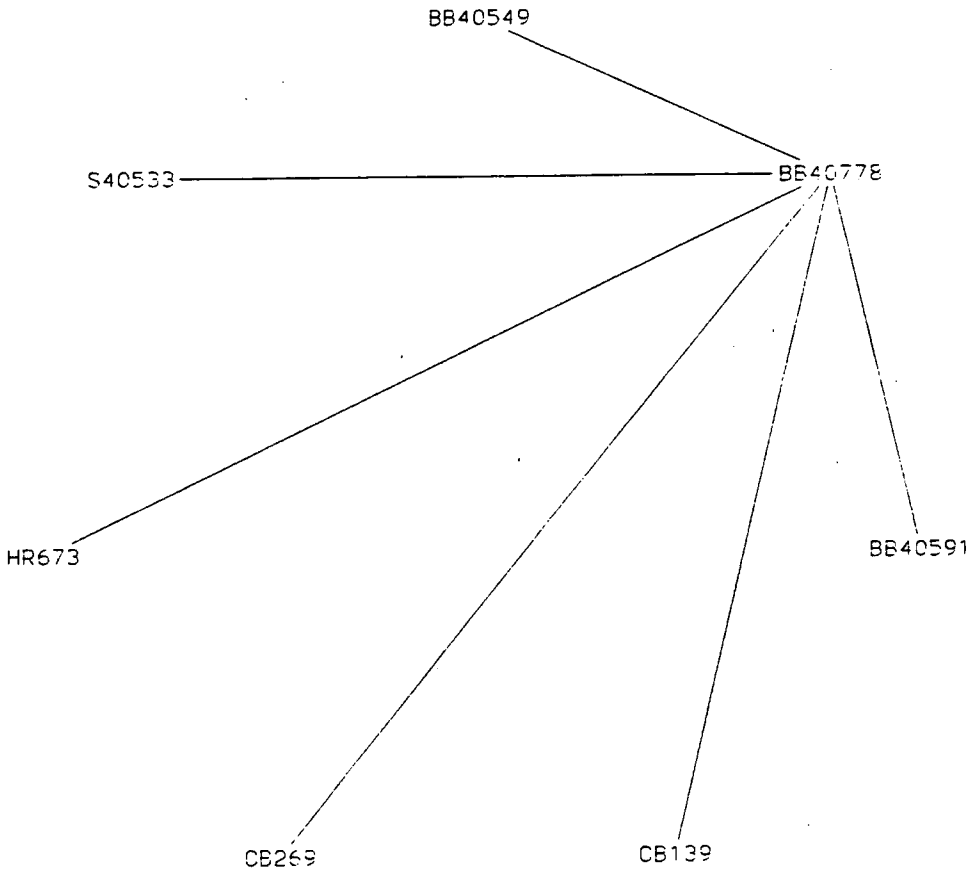


Figure 4.26 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 8)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

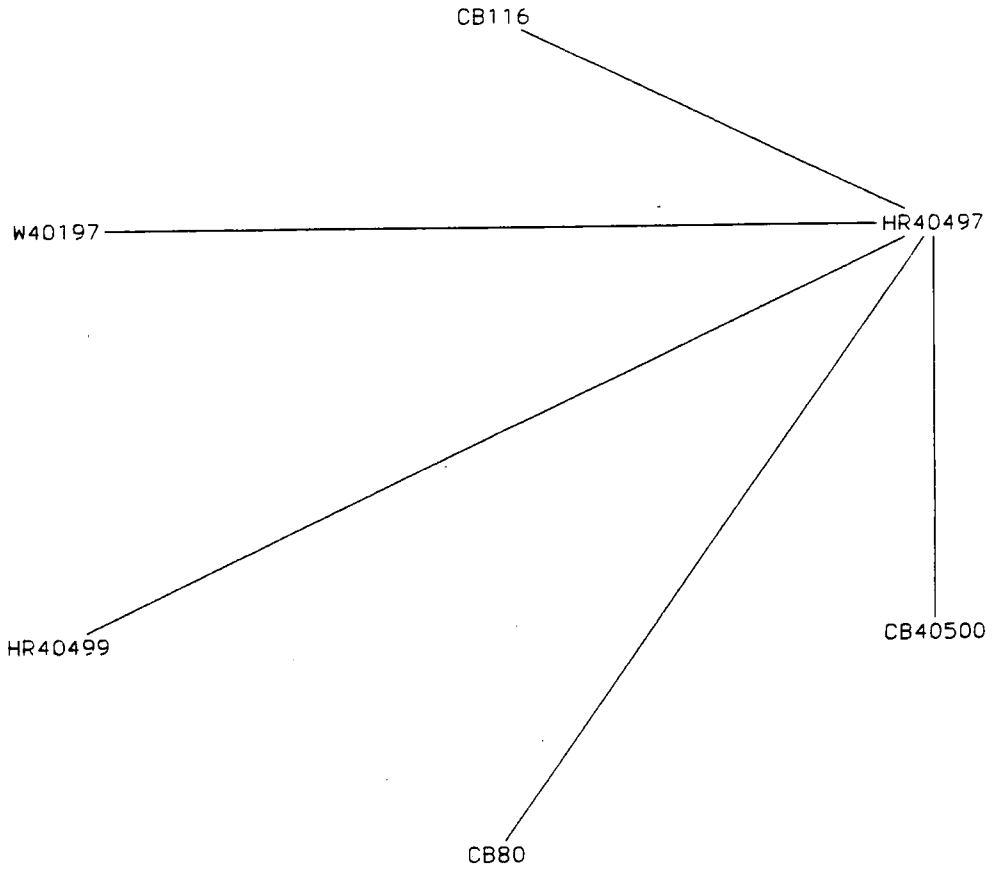
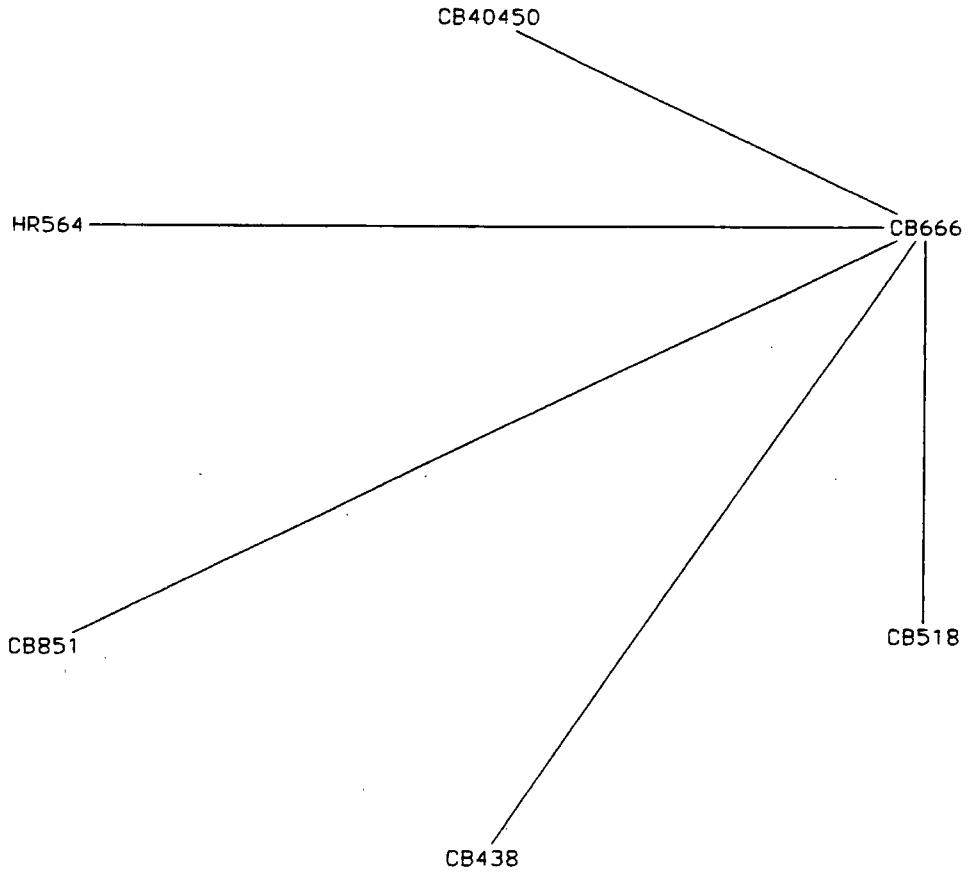


Figure 4.27 Two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and testators (group 9)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



members from more than three townships. The central figure in this group is the family of Thomas Sanderson, the grandson of Henry Sanderson, the constable of the castle in the early part of the century, (BB40778). Around 1650 Sanderson moved from Scout House to West Brandon. The long-distance connections, for example, between Willington and Brandon & Byshottles may be an indication of this; for those living in West Brandon, neighbours could be several miles away. The eighth group shows the family of John Jackson, whose inventory was worth over £100 in 1634, (HR40497), linked to the family of Thomas Forster of Steels House, whose inventory was worth less than £20 in 1623 (CB80). Group nine shows a link between the family of Thomas Johnson of Crook, who was assessed on three hearths in 1665, (CB518), and the family of John Hodgson of Crook, whose inventory was valued at less than £35 in 1691, (CB666). The differences observed between members in these subgroups suggest that will witnesses could be in different financial circumstances than testators.

Figure 4.28 shows how these two-clans based on will witnessing relate together. Interestingly, most of the groups do not overlap, although groups one and two have five common members, almost completely overlapping in their composition. Unlike the appraisers network, however, there is only one family, the Farrows of Littlewhite, (B208), who have connections in more than one separate subgroup. This suggests that the subgroups based on will witnessing could show more intimate social groups. These groups are basically connected to particular townships, or in the case of Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row, pairs of townships.

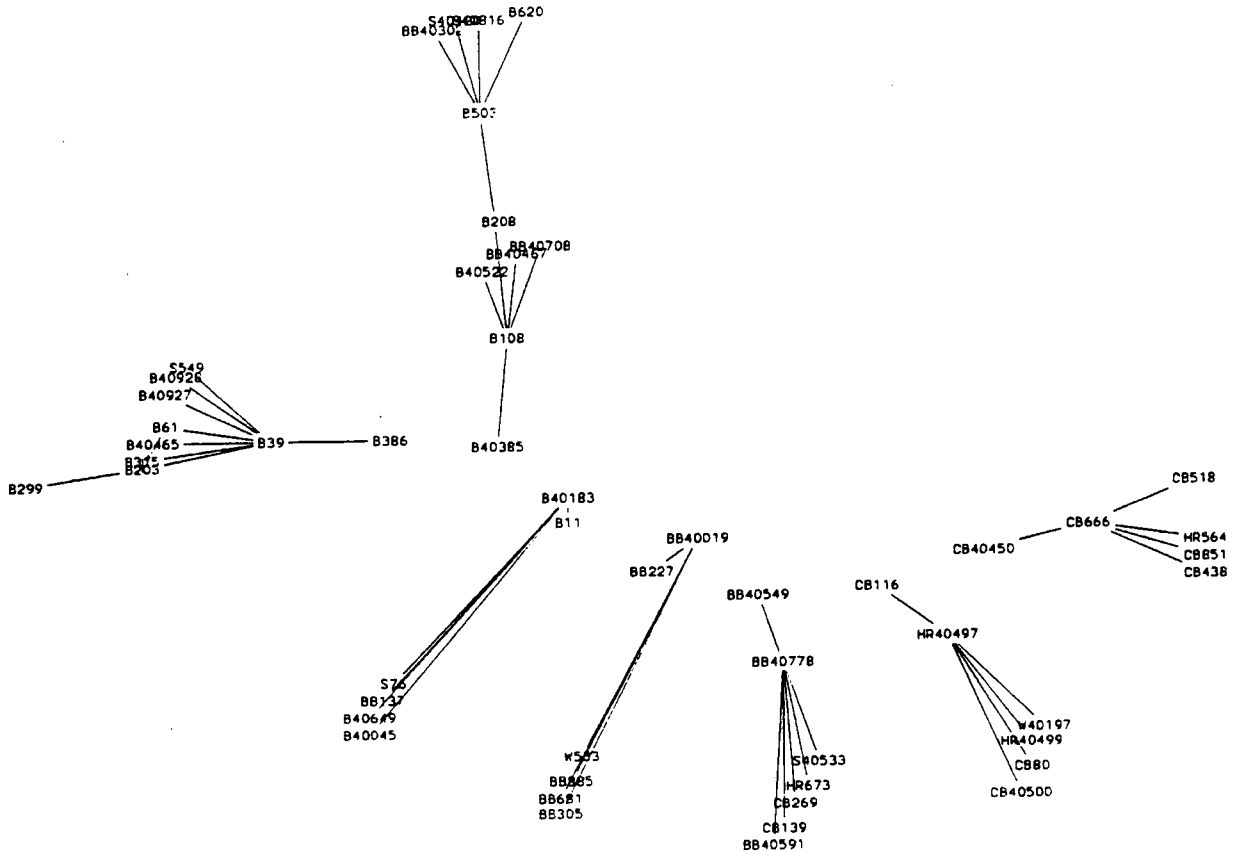
The evidence of the 2-clan analysis complements the MDS map of connections between townships. Will witnesses in Brancepeth usually

Figure 4.28 The connections between the nine two-clans showing links between the families of will witnesses and the families of testators

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



came from the same township as the testator, and some testators and will witnesses were clearly part of cohesive subgroups, based within the township. These subgroups could contain members in different kinds of financial circumstances. There is little evidence of will witnesses being summonsed from the opposite end of the parish; in fact for example, no connections between Tudhoe and Crook and Billy Row were traceable. This would suggest that witnesses were usually neighbours, rather than kin from outside the township, effective equals, if not actual equals as far as wealth was concerned.

So far the findings on the connections between appraisers and the families of testators, and between will-witnesses and testators are complementary; at times of sickness and death, Brancepeth families looked to trusted neighbours, friends and possibly kin who lived close by to witness wills and draw up inventories. Even though the period of time between making a will and death was normally a few weeks, and there was ample time to summon kin who lived a long way away to help make the will and later the inventory of goods, this role was normally undertaken by neighbours. However, not all relationships were confined to the township; even though all the townships of Brancepeth were large enough to provide sufficient witnesses for wills, some witnesses were still brought in from outside the township. Nearest neighbours did not automatically fulfil the role of will witness or appraiser; they appear to have been selected.

Looking at these relationships from a life-cycle perspective, it could be argued that at times of sickness and death, it could be expected that social relationships were more likely to be with local people. If a long period of ill-health preceded death, the deceased person may have had difficulty sustaining close relationships with friends and family who lived a

long way away. The sick or elderly person may have been socially dependent on the visits of others. Sick visiting was more convenient for those who lived close by. Without amassing evidence on the ages and circumstances of death of a large number of testators, the effect of long-term sickness or frailty upon social networks cannot be assessed. In the next section, we will, however, look at networks of relationships which were contracted without the expectation of imminent death.

4.5 Lenders of money

The next kind of relationship between the parishioners of Brancepeth to be considered is that of lending and borrowing money. Although recorded in a will or inventory at the end of a person's life, the debts and credits listed in wills and inventories are a snapshot of a continuous process which was part of daily life, not death. Essex clergyman Ralph Josselin recorded borrowing and lending money with various neighbours, and would often have his own debts at the same time as lending money to others.[48] Such loans aided cash flow in a local community, and had benefits for the borrower and the lender. In rural communities much of a family's assets were tied up in farm equipment, growing crops, and animals. When cash was needed for new purchases, a loan of money could often be necessary, or an agreement of credit between the seller and the buyer. The seller who extended credit to the purchaser was able to sell his goods more easily, provided he or she could trust the buyer to pay. A local community could function with only a small amount of cash if no one hoarded it their own houses, but more safely and sensibly lent out surplus money to be used by others.

[48] A. Macfarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 55-57.

Lending money to others placed the lender in a position of power over the borrower. At the very least, the borrower owed goodwill, loyalty and future favours to the lender who loaned money without asking for interest. Lending money at interest opened up new dynamics. If the rate of interest was low, (ten per cent was considered fair), a reasonably balanced transaction could be negotiated, where both lender and borrower benefited.[49] This was particularly important when elderly people, often widows, had to live on their financial assets because they were unable to work the land themselves. The borrower helped the lender as much as the lender helped the borrower. Paying for the use of someone else's money, 'usury', was however, considered to be a social sin if the rate of interest was extortionate. William Harrison, writing in 1587, lamented that though the trade was brought into England by the Jews, it was by then 'perfectly practiced almost by every Christian and so commonly that he is accounted but for a fool that doth lend his money for nothing.'[50] Harrison may have overstated his argument to draw attention to the problem, but the question of how many loans in rural society were made interest-free, and how many were made at interest, and at what level of interest, remains obscure. Although Holderness has argued that 'considering the diversity of social types arraigned for usury it is fair to assume that the taking of interest at an equitable rate had become well established, and may indeed have been normal by 1630-50 within English rural society', he also argues that within the circle of family and close friends, interest would 'not have been accepted as normal or just', and that even widows who may be financially dependent on interest, might lend without interest in the expectation of practical help at a future time.[51]

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[49] N. Jones, God and the Moneylenders: Usery and Law in Early Modern England, (Oxford, 1989), p. 63.

[50] W. Harrison, The Description of England, (Washington, 1994), p. 203.

[51] B. A. Holderness, 'Widows in pre-industrial society', in R. M. Smith, (ed.), Land, Kinship and Life-cycle, (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 441-2.

Unpaid loans could result in the borrower owing double the amount borrowed if the debt was pursued in court. Where interest was charged, most loans were expected to be paid back within a year, even mortgages.[52] Much of the current literature on debt litigation would lead us to believe that interest on loans was the usual practice. However, most of the evidence quoted comes from urban, trading communities, such as King's Lynn in Norfolk, which was involved in sea trading with merchants from as far away as Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[53] A glance at the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Sheriff's Court records reveal the quantity of debt cases in seventeenth-century Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[54] Because so much of urban trading depended on credit, bad payers could cause a successful trader to go broke. Many of the debtors pursued may have been unrelated to their creditor, except as a fellow trader. There was no reason to cancel the debt. This was a very different situation to that of the dying testator, who, looking round at family and friends gathered at the deathbed, chose to forgive numbers of his or her debtors.

In Brancepeth, small debts up to 40s. could be pursued in the manor court, but in the few surviving records of the Brancepeth manor court there are no instances of debt cases, although these court rolls record many other offences which were presented.[55] The Durham Chancery records include some debt cases involving Brancepeth

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[52] Jones, God and the Moneylenders, p. 68.

[53] See for example C. Muldrew, The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England, (London, 1998).

[54] Tyne and Wear Archive Service, 545/NCX/CT2/2/1, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Sheriff's Court Book 1659-1661.

[55] See customs of the manor in DCRO, D/Gr/354, Copy of inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship, fol. 21; PRO, SC/171/3, Brancepeth Manor Court 1609-1628; DCRO, D/Br/E11,13, Brancepeth Manor Court 1676-7, 1697.

parishioners. One involved William Douthwaite who had allowed himself to be bound for a debt incurred by his nephew Ralph Douthwaite to someone in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Two cases relate to unpaid mortgages; one on the family farm belonging to Gavin Bell and his wife, and the other relates to a different Ralph Douthwaite's unredeemed mortgage offered as security for a loan of £70. The Richardson family of Tudhoe had also got into difficulties, by owing Thomas Chaytor, a gentleman from the next parish £50, which his executors tried to claim. The Wright family had also got into debt problems over borrowing money to spend on their colliery.[56] The Durham Chancery records show the perils of serious debt for a small number of Brancepeth parishioners who borrowed larger sums of money. These cases were very likely to have been guaranteed by a written document, a mortgage or a bond.

In their study of Terling, Wrightson and Levine used seventy debt and credit relationships specified in wills to determine that seventeen per cent of loans were between kin, sixty-seven per cent between neighbours, and sixteen per cent with outsiders to the Terling community.[57] In Whickham, Levine and Wrightson examined debts and credits between 310 named individuals, based on information from wills and inventories. They concluded that most debts and credits 'recorded the economic dimension of neighbourhood, the bargains struck and the assistance extended and received in the normal course of the year among a group of known and presumably trusted individuals'.[58]

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[56] PRO, DURH/4/3, Durham Chancery Decrees and Orders 1671-1706, fol. 452 verso - 453, fol. 568, DURH/5/1, 5/2, 5/9, Durham Chancery Orders.

[57] Wrightson, 'Kinship in Terling', p. 100.

[58] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, p. 287.

Many probate inventories do not provide the names of debtors.[59] Although this is true of some of the Brancepeth inventories, the majority which include debts and credits did list the debtors and the creditors by name. There are three basic types of loan listed in the inventories. Some loans and credits are simply listed as a sum of money next to a person's name; others are described as being 'on a bill', others as being 'on a bond'. In addition there are other forms of credit, animals which have not yet been paid for, and unpaid rent, which could not be described as voluntary loans on the part of the lender.

In Brancepeth, the pattern of loans in inventories appears to reflect a variety of different attitudes towards lending money. In this analysis I have drawn a distinction between those loans which were guaranteed with written documents, bonds or bills, and the loans which were simply listed in the inventories. The loans which were on bills or bonds represent a business-like arrangement, which is very likely to have included interest, and could lead to serious financial problems if the debt was unpaid at the end of the arranged term, placing the debtor at the mercy of the lender. These kinds of relationships could hardly be described as socially supportive, and so they have been excluded from the analysis. Instead the analysis has concentrated on loans which were made without a written agreement. These loans were more likely to be interest free, or on low interest, arranged between people who could trust each other to pay, or with borrowers whom the lenders were prepared to help through a bad time, if they were unable to pay back on time, or in full.

The analysis was based on the 116 inventories which could be traced to the Family Reconstitution. The debts and credits listed in these

[59] Holderness, 'Widows', p. 440.

inventories were recorded and where possible the debtors and creditors listed in them were also traced to the Family Reconstitution FRFs. Excluding the loans of money backed with bonds or bills, these loan relationships produced a matrix of 188 nodes, (lenders and borrowers), with 191 links between them. This matrix was considered to be asymmetrical; the direction of the connections was from lender to borrower, based on the assumption that the loans were made without interest, and therefore the borrower was the beneficiary in the relationship at the time of the loan. The values of the loans, (which ranged between 10d. and £80), were ignored, because these could be dependent on the financial circumstances of the lender and the borrower, rather than the amount of trust which existed between lender and borrower. Likewise, if two loans were given by the same lender to the same borrower, this was not counted twice. The relationships in the matrix were binary, indicating only the presence or absence of a loan.

One hundred and ninety one links is not a large number of connections; because the matrix is directional, and few families were shown as both borrowers and lenders, the number of links are nearly half the amount of links shown in a symmetrical matrix. Because these are debt and credit connections, it is possible for a single family to have relationships with a large number of other families, particularly if they had plenty of spare cash to loan out. However, in this network of trust loans, the highest number of connections shown for one FRF was twenty. This suggests that, in this analysis, one or two money-lending families do not dominate the network. One of the two FRF families who had twenty links in this network (the Robinsons of Brancepeth) had also made nearly as many loans on bills and bonds, but the other FRF family who had twenty links (the Sparks of Tudhoe), apparently had no money lent out on bills or bonds; John Spark had been mainly lending to his neighbours in Tudhoe.

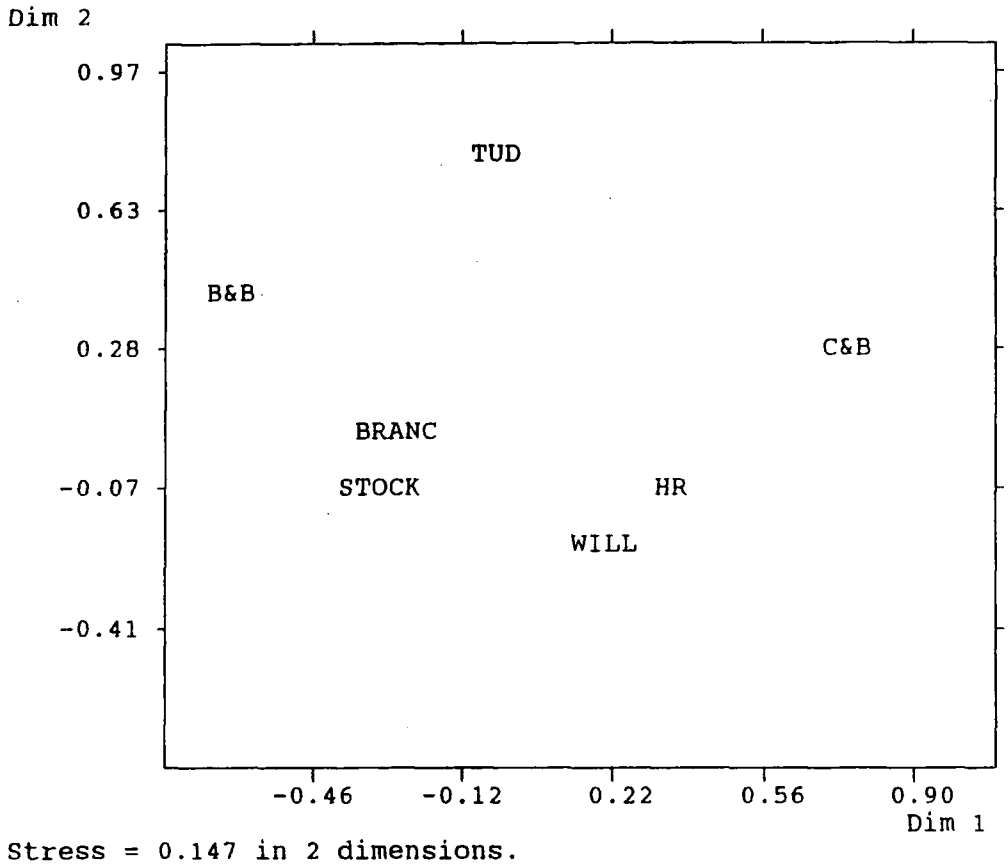
Table 4.3 shows the number of loans which were made within and between townships. The lower number of links in this matrix, compared with the appraisers and will witnesses matrices makes the lenders matrix more difficult to interpret. However, quite clearly, most loans take place within Brancepeth township, although Stockley is more often brought into the social neighbourhood of Brancepeth than it was in the appraiser and will witnesses network. In Tudhoe, Willington and Brandon and Byshottles, most loans are made within the township. Although the figures for Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row are low, they show that loans were made with people living in other townships, and not exclusively within their own townships. The links between townships, recorded in the matrix shown as Table 4.3, were used to produce the MDS diagram shown in Figure 4.29. In this diagram, Brancepeth and Stockley are shown adjacent to each other, as are Willington and Helmington Row. These four townships are quite central to the diagram, reflecting their interrelationships with other townships. In comparison, Crook and Billy Row, Brandon and Byshottles, and particularly Tudhoe, are shown in more isolated, peripheral positions, as they are on the geographical map shown as Figure 4.1. This pattern was generally reflected when the MDS diagram was also generated using random starting configurations, although one map with equally low stress does not place the four townships of Brancepeth, Stockley, Helmington Row and Willington so centrally on the map. Even though MDS diagrams are not unique solutions to the possibilities of mapping the closeness of townships based on interconnecting ties, the results show a remarkable similarity, which is consistent with the figures given in the raw data, as shown in Table 4.3.

Brancepeth and Stockley are more closely tied in this network than in the others so far analysed. Elsewhere in the parish, more connections

Table 4.3 Links from the families of lenders to the families of borrowers

Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	49	6	0	3	13	2	7	80
Brandon & Byshottles	5	14	1	1	2	0	0	23
Crook & Billy Row	3	1	2	3	0	0	1	10
Helmington Row	2	1	2	2	0	1	4	12
Stockley	6	3	0	2	5	0	6	22
Tudhoe	3	1	0	1	2	14	1	22
Willington	2	0	2	4	3	0	11	22
TOTALS	70	26	7	16	25	17	30	191

Figure 4.29 MDS diagram of inter-township links between the families of lenders and the families of borrowers (trust loans)



Stress = 0.147 in 2 dimensions.

Elapsed time: 1 second. 1/4/1980 2:04 PM.
UCINET IV 1.63/X Copyright 1991-1995 by Analytic Technologies.

are between families from different townships than were found in the appraisers or will-witness network. This would suggest that loans of money were often obtained from people who were not neighbours, as well as from those who were. This may be because, in Brancepeth parish, it could be hard to find a neighbour who could spare some cash to lend, except in the townships with larger populations, such as Brancepeth. In this network, Brancepeth and Stockley (together), seem to be the lending centre of the parish. As villages either side of the castle, the populations of Brancepeth and Stockley may have been better acquainted with families living in outlying townships, who would have needed to make regular journeys to the area around the castle, where church services were conducted, where manorial courts were held, and where most of the tradesmen of the parish sold their goods and services. An alternate explanation could be that longer distance loans sometimes took place between kin.

Although there appear to be no professional moneylenders in this network, an analysis of the pattern of loans within cohesive subgroups of families would reveal the power of particular lenders in the currency of social credit. Figures 4.30 to 4.39 show the ten two-clans of lenders, with directional arrows from lender to borrower. Although most of these subgroups are in star formation, centred on a single family, groups one, two, three, four and seven include relationships between other group members. The structure of group seven (Figure 4.36) is very cohesive and balanced, with no one single lender family dominating relationships. Even where one family appears to dominate a subgroup, this is not necessarily because they were always in the position of lender. Even the Robinson family of Brancepeth (B189) received loans of money as well as providing them. The central family in group two, the Johnsons of Willington (W111) are mainly borrowing money, although five of their relationships are as

Figure 4.30 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 1)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

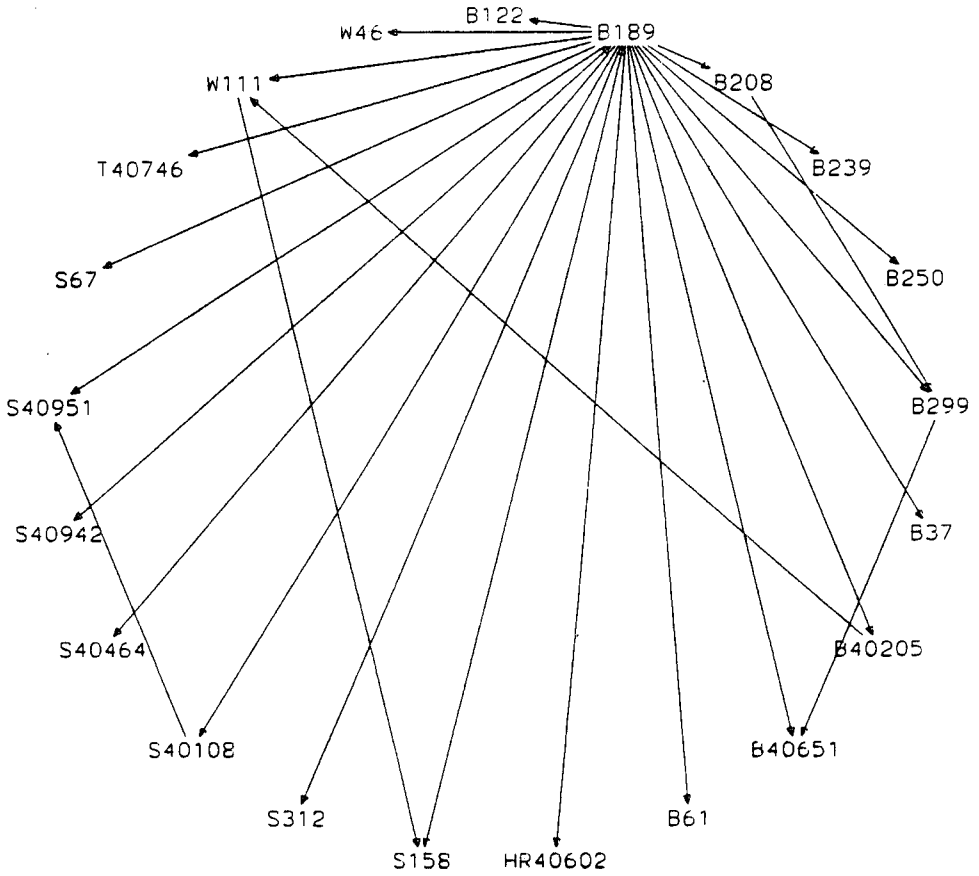


Figure 4.31 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 2)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

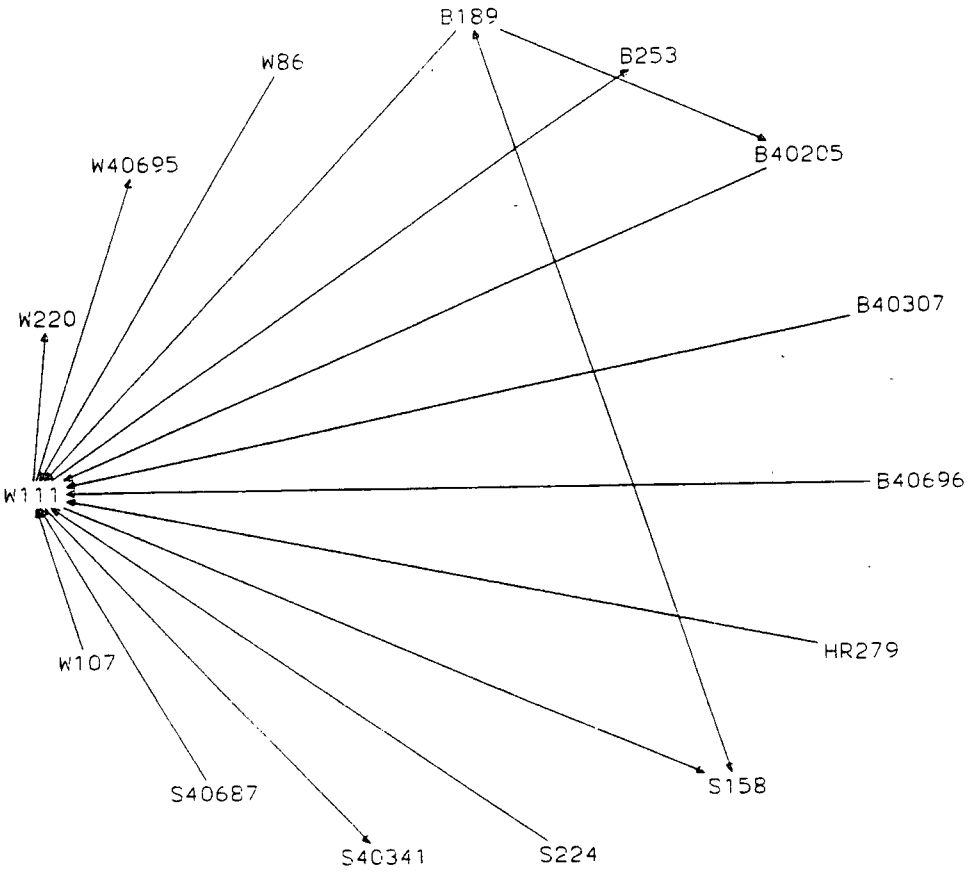


Figure 4.32 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 3)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

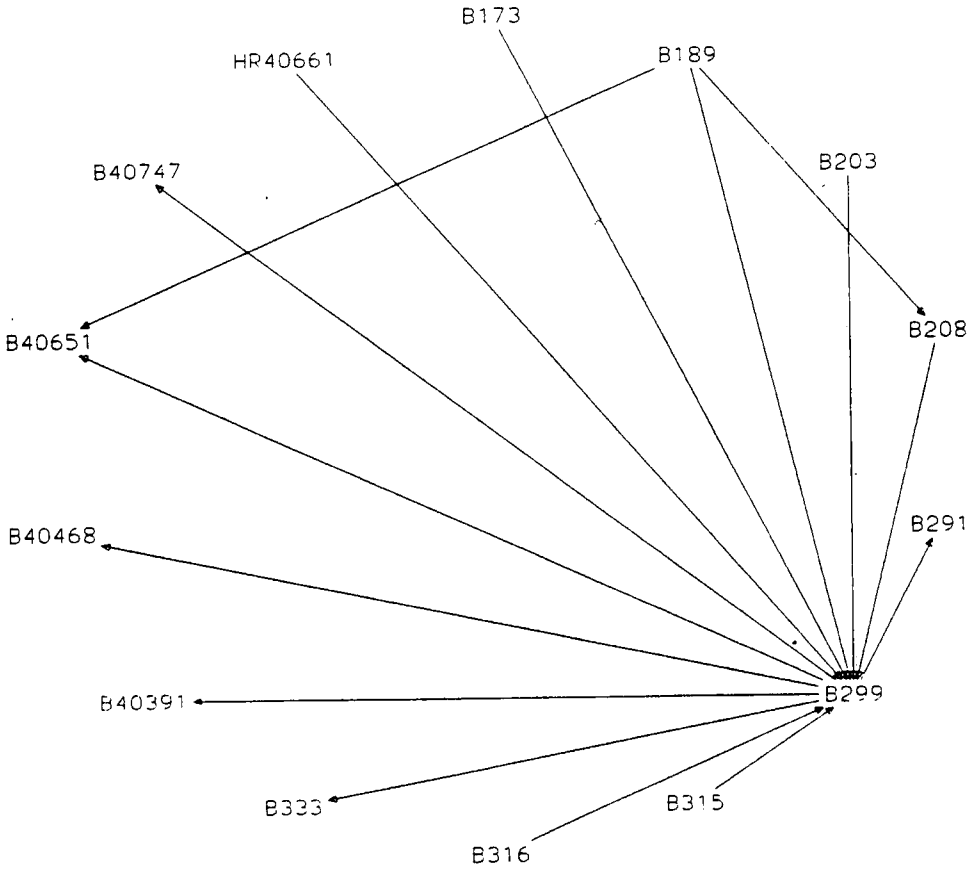


Figure 4.33 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 4)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

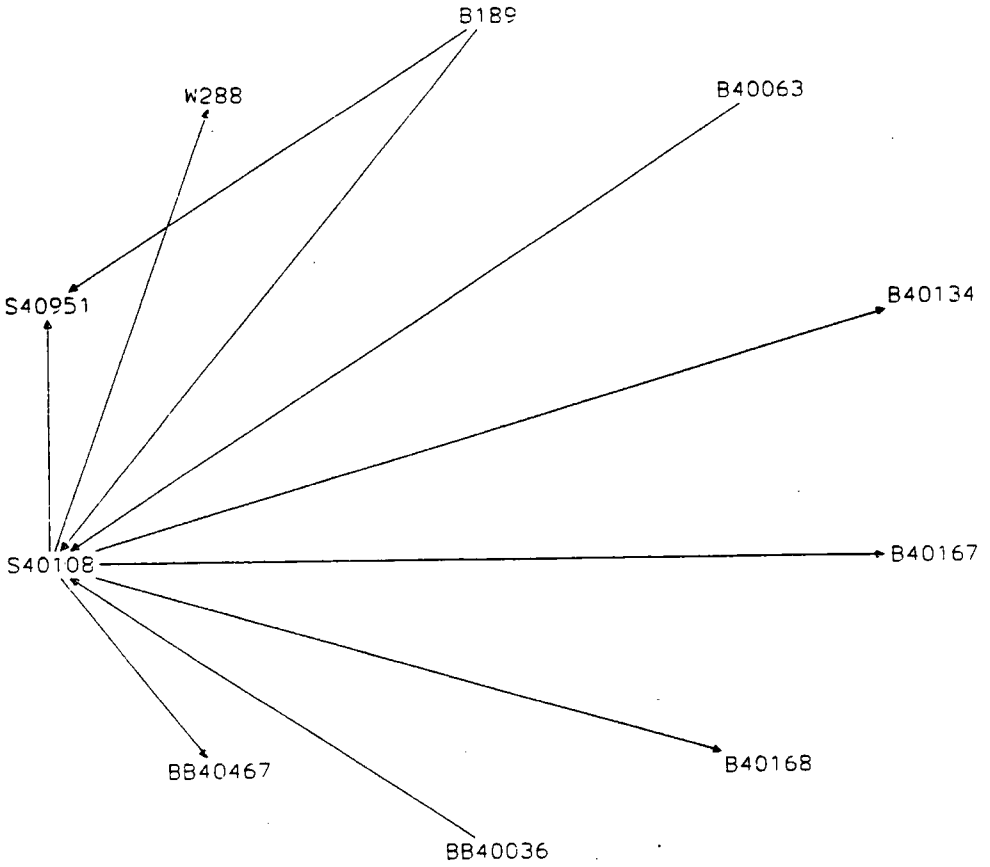


Figure 4.34 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 5)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

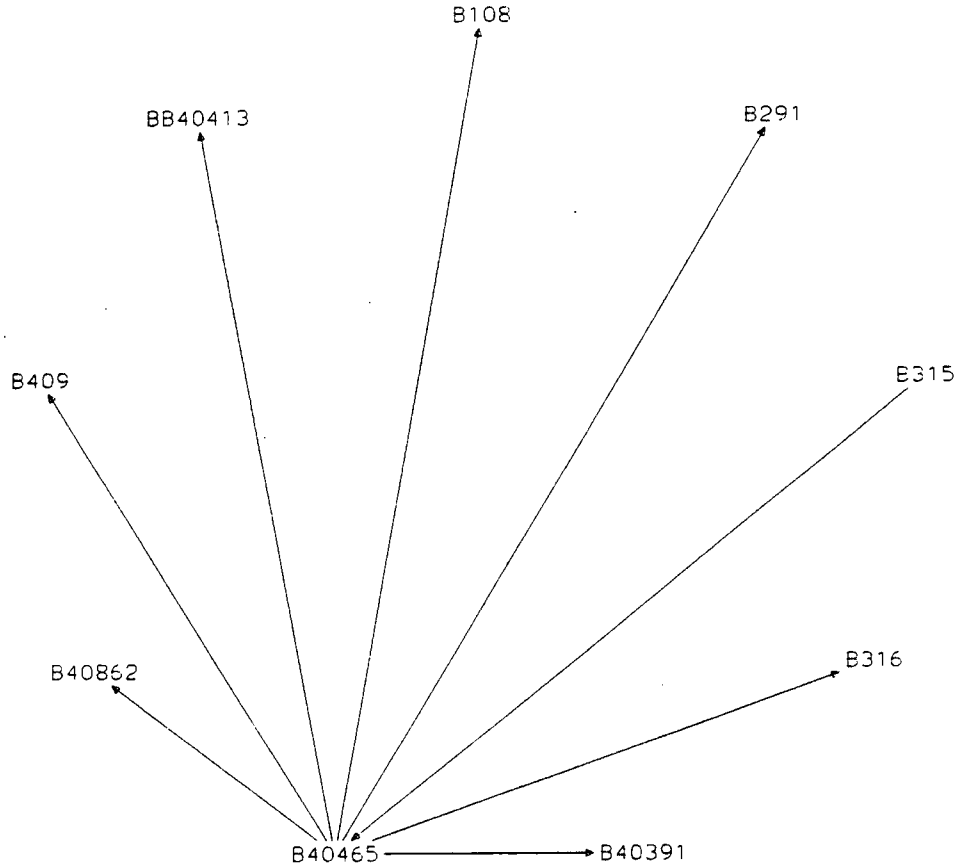


Figure 4.35 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 6)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

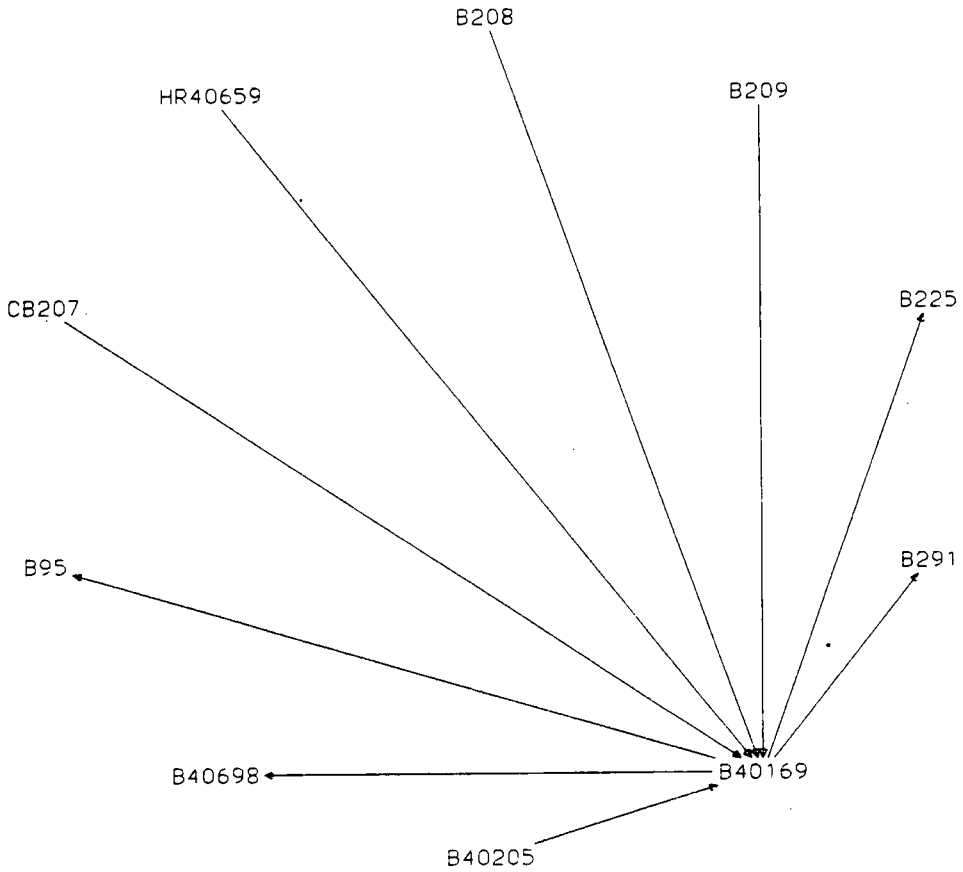


Figure 4.36 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 7)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

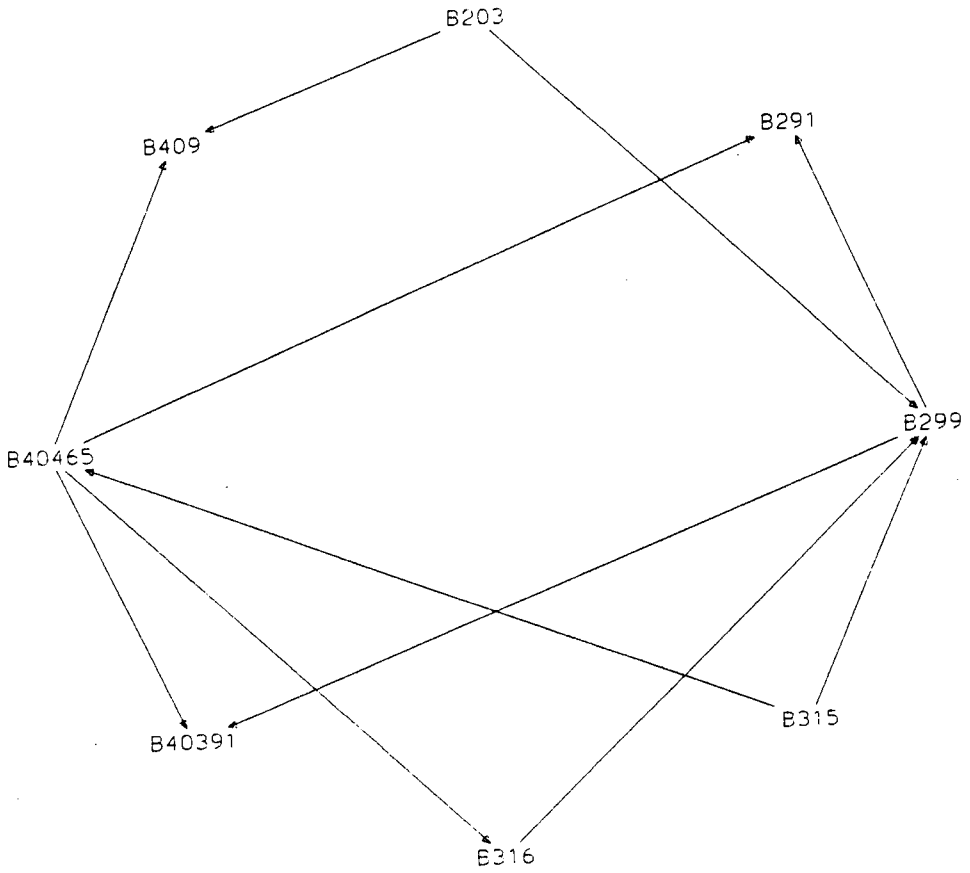


Figure 4.37 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 8)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

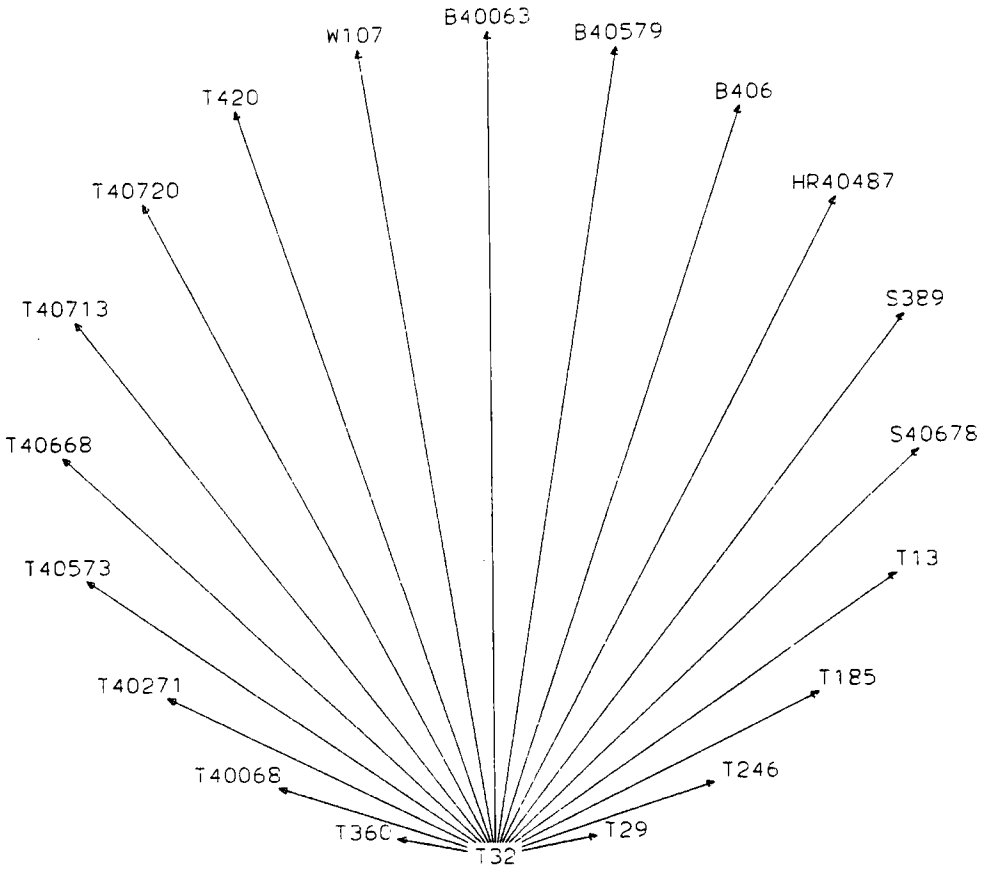


Figure 4.38 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 9)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

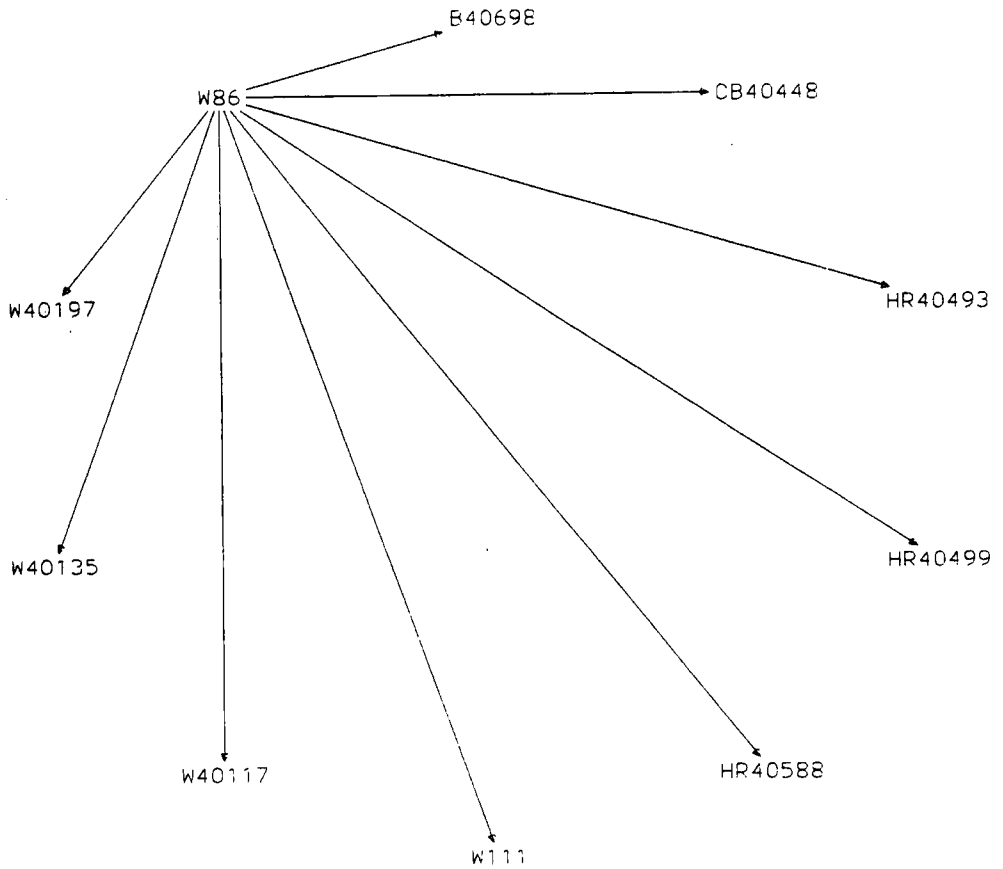
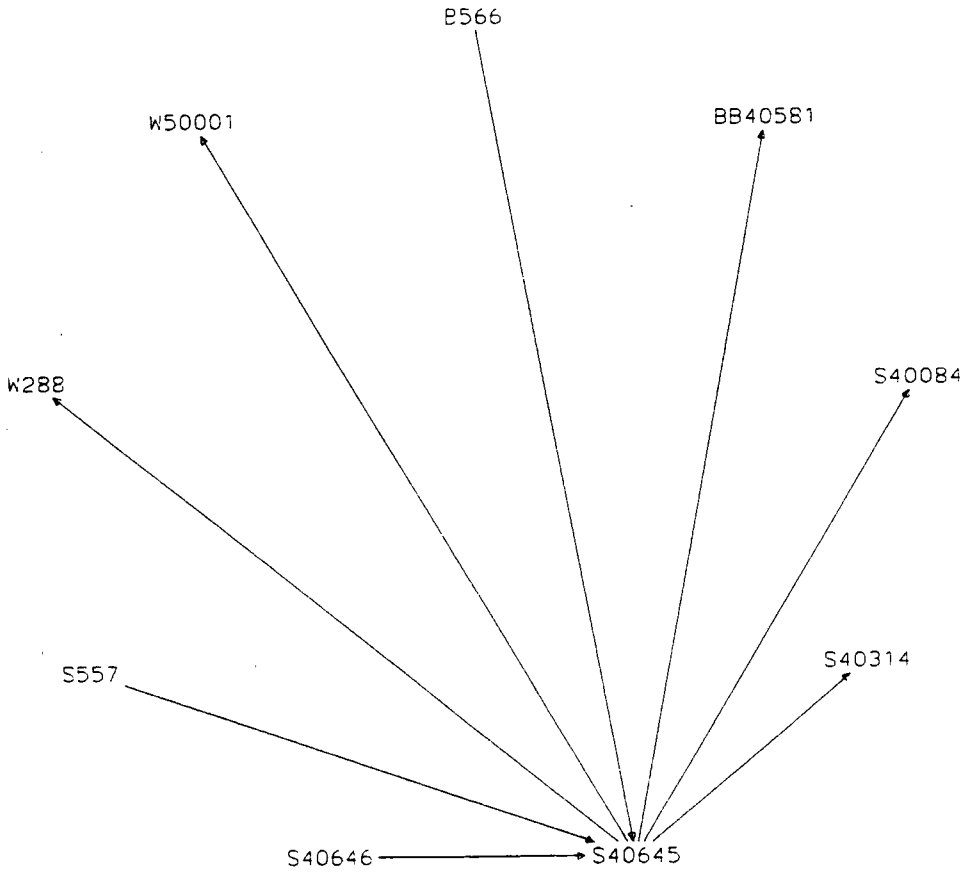


Figure 4.39 Two-clan showing the direction of loans of money, from lenders to borrowers (group 10)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



lenders. Similarly the White family in group three (B299) are mainly borrowers, although six of their relationships are as lenders. Only in group eight (T32) and group nine (W86) do lending families dominate the subgroups (John Sparke of Tudhoe and William Iley of The Burn). Neither of these men were very wealthy; John Sparke's inventory was worth £221. 7s., and the inventory of William Iley was worth only £27. 18s. 8d.[60] Clearly, in Brancepeth, the kind of lending which took place without bills and bonds was normally a reciprocal form of assistance within a group of people. The evidence of the two-clan analysis, along with the individual inventory documents, suggests that it was quite normal to be a borrower and a lender within a network.

Recusants occasionally feature in these subgroups. In group three (Figure 4.32), the family of churchwarden, Thomas Atkinson (B315) is shown lending money to the Whites of Brancepeth (B299), who loan money to the Hackforths (B40391). Katherine Hackforth was reported for recusancy at least three times.[61] In group five the Atkinsons (B315) lend to a different intermediary (B40465) who also lends to the Hackworths (B40391). In group eight, the family of John Sparke of Tudhoe (T32) are seen loaning money to five households containing recusants, of which four were in Tudhoe. Although recusants were technically excommunicate, they were not excluded from the credit networks in Brancepeth.[62]

Figure 4.40 shows common membership between these ten two-clans. Although the individual subgroups are recognisable in most cases,

[60] DULASC, Inventories of John Sparke 1637 and William Iley 1644.

[61] DDCL, Sharp MSS 110, List of recusants 1628; DULASC, SJB/5, Visitation Book; Post-dissolution muniments Box 30 item 29.

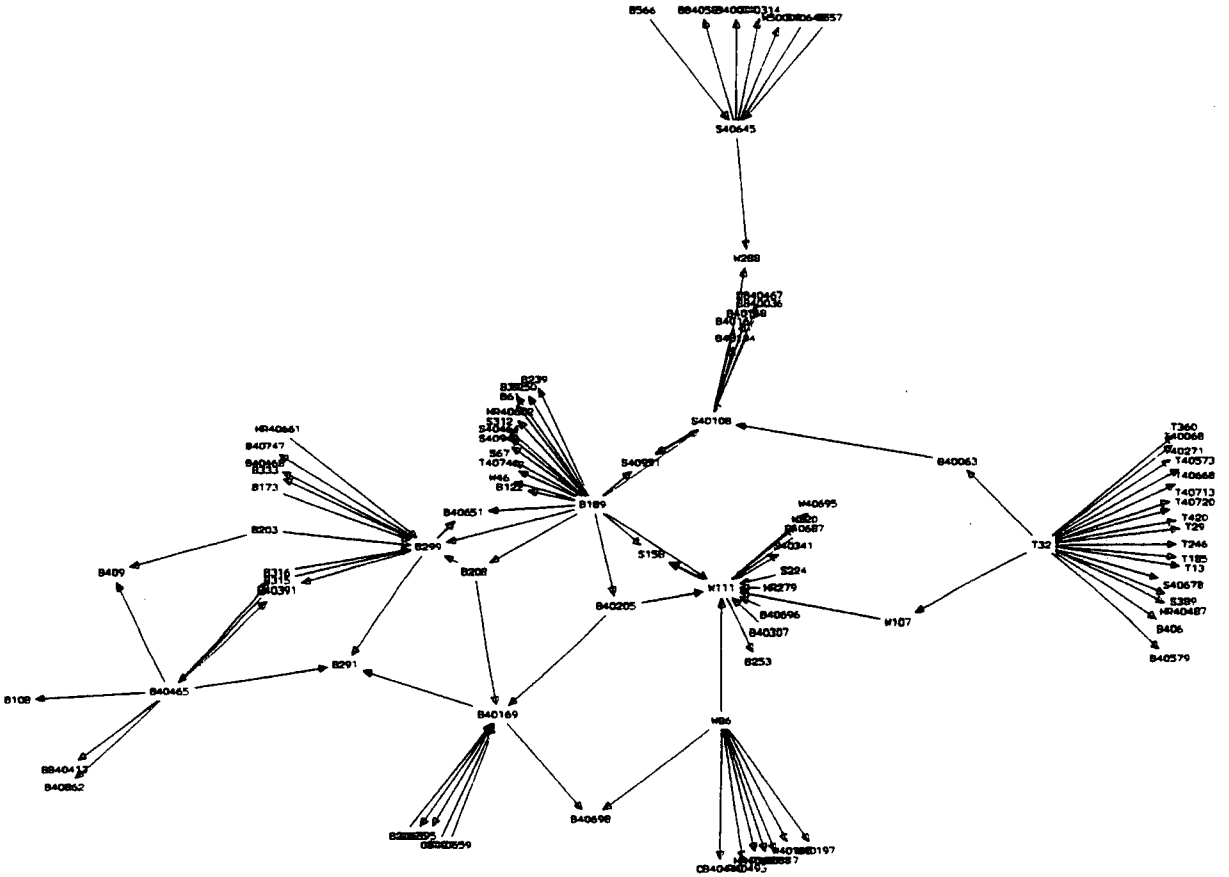
[62] CBP, Vol. 2, 1595-1603, p. 334, Letter from Bishop of Durham to Burghley, 2 June 1597; R. Burn, Ecclesiastical Law, 2 vols., (London, 1763), Vol. 2, p. 208.

Figure 4.40 The connections between the ten two-clans of lenders and borrowers

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



there are a considerable number of families who form links between subgroups. Examples are the Johnson family of Willington (W111), and the Whites of Brancepeth (B299) who borrowed in more than one subgroup. Some groups of borrowers have connections only in one cohesive subgroup, such as the borrowers in Tudhoe, and the recipients of the loans made by the Morrison family of Stockley (S40645). However the impression left by Figure 4.40 is of a much more integrated network of subgroups than was produced by the appraisers and the will witnesses two-clans.

The two-clans pick out the most cohesive parts of a network. Without a much larger collection of debt and credit relationships to analyse, it is difficult to make judgements about the relative centrality or isolation of particular townships, or about the general flow of money within the parish families; after all, the evidence on Tudhoe for this particular analysis comes from only one inventory. However, although the evidence is limited, it does confirm that money lending and borrowing was not the prerogative of a small number of families within the parish. One hundred and eighty-eight families are included in this analysis, as lenders, borrowers or both. Even though the number of connections for analysis is not great, much of the borrowing which is identified has a geographical focus in the township, but, unlike the other relationships so far examined, there is also considerable evidence of links between townships in the parish.

The neighbours were not therefore the automatic source of loans for families in seventeenth-century Brancepeth. This may have been because many families were too poor to lend their neighbours money, however much they would have liked to help them out. Families may have had to ask kin in other townships for loans, or when the limits of their

'social credit' where exhausted, they may have been forced to resort to loans at interest, based on calculated risk, and drawn up on a document, ready to be used if the debtor defaulted.

If kin could be asked to provide loans of family money, whether families had kin living within the neighbourhood of the township could be quite significant in the patterns of debt and credit. In order to investigate further, it is necessary to make an analysis of the distribution of kinship links within the parish.

4.6 Kinship in Brancepeth

The Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth provides evidence of kinship links within the parish population. Each FRF has references to the families of the parents, and the marriage reference numbers of children if they appear elsewhere in the Family Reconstitution. Unfortunately there are no details on the FRFs of the names of the parents' siblings, cousins, uncles, grandchildren or grandparents. Some of these kin can be traced by finding the FRFs of grandparents and from there, the FRFs of their offspring. In a large Family Reconstitution, with approximately 1900 FRFs, it would be very time consuming to trace all the kinship ties between every FRF in the Family Reconstitution using this method.

The tried and tested method of assessing kinship links within a community has been to take a 'snapshot' of relationships, a one-off count at a particular time in the history of the community, as a rough indicator of the strength or absence of kinship ties. This method was used by Todd, in his study of European peasant communities.[63] The method was adapted

[63] Todd, 'Seven Peasant Communities'.

by Wrightson and Levine in their studies of Terling and Whickham.[64] Wrightson and Levine based their 'snapshot' on the households which were listed in the Hearth Tax. They traced all the kinship relationships in the Family Reconstitutions of Terling and Whickham which linked the households shown on the Hearth Tax assessments of 1671 and 1666 respectively. They used this, and other information collected in a card index to assess whether or not each household had other known kin living in Terling or Whickham respectively. The movement of families in and out of the parishes made it impossible to trace all kinship links, because some of these connections happened beyond the boundaries of the parishes, or outside the time period of the Family Reconstitutions. Their figures were therefore minimum estimates of kinship links.

In order to overcome some of the limitations of kinship estimates, Todd concentrated on first order kinship links, (i.e. relationships with parents, married children or siblings living in other households) because a greater proportion of links were recoverable in the sources available to him. He also compared the results of this to estimates of kinship links based on matching surnames.[65] Wrightson and Levine similarly singled out first order kinship links for separate analysis. They also calculated maximum estimates of kinship links, based on matching surnames and other evidence which were 'long-shots'. A similar approach to the assessment of kinship links within Brancepeth parish is used, making it possible to compare the results with those from Terling.

In this study of Brancepeth, the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment described in chapter 2 was used as the household listing

[64] Wrightson and Levine, Terling, p. 84-87; Levine and Wrightson, Whickham, pp. 332-3. A similar method was used by Takahashi, see Spufford and Takahashi, 'Will Witnesses'.

[65] Todd, 'Seven Peasant Communities', unpaginated.

for the analysis. Minimum estimates of kinship links are based on the Family Reconstitution evidence. Maximum estimates of kinship links have been calculated based on combining Family Reconstitution kinship links with matching surnames. Households have been identified by their FRF number, and for comparability, all the households on the Hearth Tax have been included in the calculations, even if they could not be traced to an FRF.

Table 4.4 compares Brancepeth to Terling on the basis of the number of householders within each parish who had kin living in the same parish as themselves.[66] Although the minimum estimates for linked households in Terling are higher than Brancepeth, the maximum estimates are higher in Brancepeth than in Terling. The average of minimum and maximum estimates would work out almost the same, forty-six per cent in Terling, and forty-five per cent in Brancepeth.

Concentrating on first order kinship relationships between the households, Table 4.5 makes a further comparison between Brancepeth and Terling. Although these figures show a smaller proportion of families linked in Brancepeth than Terling, some families were related to three or more other families in Brancepeth, whereas in Terling, links were concentrated usually with one or two other families. These are fairly basic measures of kinship between households.

In an attempt to move beyond these basic measures, Todd, and Wrightson and Levine, used the measures of absolute and relative kinship density, as described earlier in this chapter. Comparing Terling to Brancepeth, the first order kinship links produced a lower relative and

[66] Comparative figures for Terling shown in Wrightson & Levine, Terling, p. 85.

Table 4.4 Related households in the parish: Brancepeth compared to Terling

(BRANCEPETH BASED ON THE 1665 MICHAELMAS HEARTH TAX AND 49 ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE 1666 LADY DAY HEARTH TAX)

	TERLING		BRANCEPETH	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum (FRC links only)	Maximum (FRC + Surnames)
Total householders	122 (100%)	122 (100%)	342 (100%)	342 (100%)
Related to other householders	48 (39.3%)	64 (52.5%)	80 (23.4%)	225 (65.8%)
Unrelated to other householders	74 (60.7%)	58 (47.5%)	262 (76.6%)	117 (34.2%)

Table 4.5 First-order kinship links between households-conjugal family units: Brancepeth compared to Terling

(BRANCEPETH BASED ON THE 1665 MICHAELMAS HEARTH TAX AND 49 ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE 1666 LADY DAY HEARTH TAX)

	TERLING	BRANCEPETH
Total number of HH-CFUs	122	342
Unrelated to others	67%	80%
Related to 1	26%	14%
Related to 2	7%	3%
Related to 3+	0%	3%
Total % related	33%	20%

absolute kinship density figure in Brancepeth, as shown in Table 4.6. This confirms the picture suggested by counting the number of interrelated households. The analysis of first order kinship links suggests that Brancepeth people may have had proportionately no more first order kin links to other households within the parish than did the families of Terling. The phrase 'no more first order kin links' has been used rather than the phrase 'fewer first order kin links'. The number of first order links recoverable compared to the number of households in the parish is affected by the number of years for which a Family Reconstitution has been carried out. In addition, the number of household heads which are not traceable to the Family Reconstitution should be compared between parishes. Households which are listed in the Hearth Tax, but are not traceable on the Family Reconstitution decrease the overall density created by interrelated families in the network. While some of these households are likely to be genuinely resident in Brancepeth at the time of the Hearth Tax assessment, others could be absentee landlords, charged or exempted for their empty house. However, allowing for some dilution of kinship densities in Brancepeth due to the limited duration of the Family Reconstitution and the possibility of absentee landlords, it would seem reasonable to assume that, looking at the whole parish, first order kinship links were not very numerous, compared to the population of the parish.

Table 4.7 provides a different method of comparing Terling with Brancepeth. In this analysis, both minimum and maximum estimates of kin links have been calculated. The Terling figures are based on all Family Reconstitution links and other evidence for minimum estimates, with the addition of matching surnames and less certain evidence for maximum estimates. The Brancepeth figures are based on Family Reconstitution links only for minimum estimates, with the addition of surname matches

Table 4.6 The density of kinship networks (first order links): Brancepeth compared to Terling

(BRANCEPETH BASED ON THE 1665 MICHAELMAS HEARTH TAX AND 49 ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE 1666 LADY DAY HEARTH TAX)

	TERLING	BRANCEPETH
Total number of HH-CFUs	122	342
Absolute kinship density	0.39	0.30
Relative kinship density	0.3%	0.09%

Table 4.7 Kinship links (all links): Brancepeth compared to Terling

(BRANCEPETH BASED ON THE 1665 MICHAELMAS HEARTH TAX AND 49 ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE 1666 LADY DAY HEARTH TAX)

	TERLING		BRANCEPETH	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum (FRC only)	Maximum (FRC + Surnames)
Total number of householders	122 (100%)	122 (100%)	342 (100%)	342 (100%)
Unrelated to others	74 (60.7%)	58 (47.5%)	262 (77%)	117 (34%)
Related to 1	32 (26.2%)	39 (32.0%)	48 (14%)	55 (16%)
Related to 2	10 (8.2%)	16 (13.1%)	8 (2%)	51 (15%)
Related to 3	4 (3.3%)	6 (4.9%)	8 (2%)	48 (14%)
Related to 4	2 (1.6%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (1%)	13 (4%)
Related to 5 +			11 (3%)	58 (17%)
Total Related	48 (39.3%)	64 (52.5%)	80 (23%)	225 (66%)
Absolute kinship density	0.59	0.83	0.51	2.64
Relative kinship density	0.5%	0.7%	0.15%	0.77%

for maximum estimates. Predictably, the minimum estimates are higher for Terling than Brancepeth, probably partly or wholly because more evidence was used. The maximum estimates are clearly higher in Brancepeth for the families related to two or more other families. Surname evidence suggests that some families in Brancepeth could have been related to five or more other families in the parish. Although there are no guarantees that matching surnames indicate actual kinship links, they could indicate the more distant kinship links which cannot be identified by a Family Reconstitution which has only been undertaken for a short period. The minimum estimates for Brancepeth are more similar to Terling where families are related to three or more other families. In these cases, matching surnames are likely to be found.

Calculations of kinship density are based on a relationship between the number of links in the network and the number of family households. Thinking of the 342 households included in the Brancepeth analysis as a large matrix of 342 x 342 nodes, it may be that some parts of the network are denser than others. Terling was a small geographical parish, based on one village which had only 122 households. In larger geographical areas, and in larger populations, kinship connections could become more unevenly distributed. As the other social relationships between families analysed so far appeared to centre on the township, the township was chosen as an alternative unit of analysis for the measurement of kinship density.

The Hearth Tax assessments for Brancepeth were arranged under township headings. The number of households per township ranged from ninety-four (Brancepeth) to eighteen (Crook and Billy Row). Tables 4.8 to 4.14 show minimum and maximum estimates of kinship density for each township. Brancepeth township, with the largest number of households,

Table 4.8 Kinship in Brancepeth township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	94	94
Total families linked	26	54
Absolute kinship density	0.51	1.68
Relative kinship density	0.55%	1.80%

Table 4.9 Kinship in Brandon and Byshottles township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	59	59
Total families linked	9	22
Absolute kinship density	0.20	0.51
Relative kinship density	0.35%	0.88%

Table 4.10 Kinship in Crook and Billy Row township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	18	18
Total families linked	2	5
Absolute kinship density	0.11	0.33
Relative kinship density	0.65%	1.96%

Table 4.11 Kinship in Helmington Row township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	30	30
Total families linked	3	10
Absolute kinship density	0.13	1.0
Relative kinship density	0.46%	3.45%

Table 4.12 Kinship in Stockley township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666Hearth Tax	47	47
Total families linked	2	20
Absolute kinship density	0.04	0.64
Relative kinship density	0.09%	1.39%

Table 4.13 Kinship in Tudhoe township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	55	55
Total families linked	5	25
Absolute kinship density	0.09	0.72
Relative kinship density	0.17%	1.35%

Table 4.14 Kinship in Willington township

	MINIMUM (FRC links only)	MAXIMUM (FRC + Surnames)
Total households/families shown on 1665 + extras from 1666 Hearth Tax	39	39
Total families linked	6	17
Absolute kinship density	0.36	0.77
Relative kinship density	0.94%	2.02%

achieves the highest minimum estimate of kinship density, showing relative kinship density at a higher level than Terling. The smaller townships of Willington (thirty-nine households) and Crook and Billy Row (eighteen households) also show a higher relative kinship density than Terling, because some of the families there had numbers of local connections. Other parts of the parish decrease the minimum estimates of kinship density observed, notably Tudhoe, where the results of the Family Reconstitution were less satisfactory, as explained in chapter three. The higher maximum estimate of relative density (based on Family Reconstitution links and surnames) also suggests that Tudhoe kinship links might be underrepresented in the Family Reconstitution, and that surname matches may provide a better estimate of kinship density.

Density measures have their limitations where there is known to be missing links in the data matrix. The other descriptive measures which have been used to analyse appraisers, will witnesses and lenders relationships can also be used to probe the network structure of kinship relationships in Brancepeth. Table 4.15 shows the kinship links within and between townships based on Family Reconstitution links. These figures make it possible to examine the structure of the network which produced the low minimum estimates of kinship density in Brancepeth.

Apart from in Crook and Billy Row, Helmington Row, and Stockley, the highest number of kinship links between households were found within the township, as shown on the diagonal values in Table 4.15. Crook and Billy Row and Helmington Row were closely linked to each other, and Stockley was closely linked to Brancepeth. These results suggest that kinship density could be greater if the parish was split into sub-areas, based on the township, or adjacent townships. Possible subgroups of townships where kinship interconnections were greatest can be suggested

Table 4.15 Kinship links within and between townships: Family Reconstitution links only

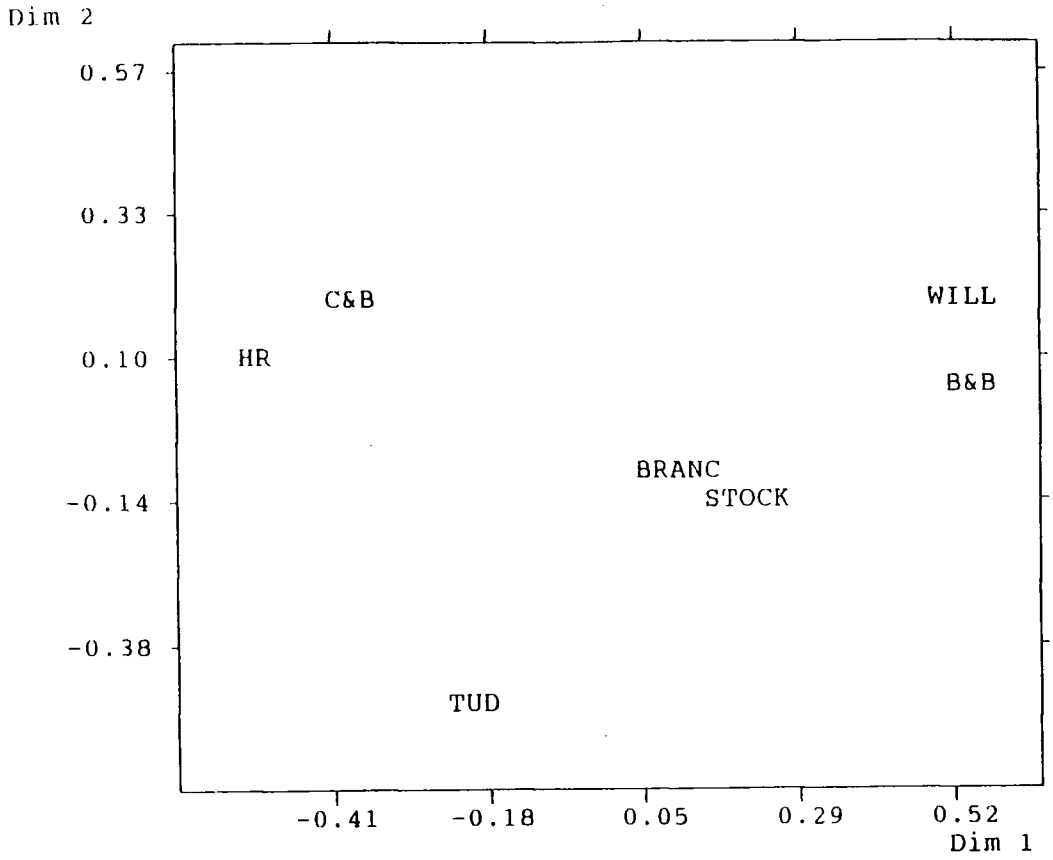
Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	48	6	2	2	8	2	5	73
Brandon & Byshottles	6	12	0	0	3	0	9	30
Crook & Billy Row	2	0	2	4	1	0	1	10
Helmington Row	2	0	4	4	0	1	0	11
Stockley	8	3	1	0	2	0	0	14
Tudhoe	2	0	0	1	0	6	0	9
Willington	5	9	1	0	0	0	14	29
TOTALS	73	30	10	11	14	9	29	176

by looking at the MDS map of inter-township links, as shown in Figure 4.41. Brancepeth and Stockley are placed close together, Helmington Row and Crook and Billy Row are close together, and Willington is placed close to Brandon and Byshottles. In all the solutions, Tudhoe is isolated. Brancepeth and Stockley are placed in a fairly central position.

A Family Reconstitution of only one hundred years fails to identify many second and third degree kinship links. First order kinship links might therefore provide a useful comparison, because they are less likely to be affected by the short period of reconstitution. Table 4.16 shows that a very similar pattern emerges for first order kinship links within and between townships. Apart from Crook and Billy Row, and Stockley, the highest number of kinship links were found within the township, as shown on the diagonal values. Figure 4.42 shows the MDS map of connections between townships based on first order kinship links. The proximities of the townships are very similar to the results shown in Figure 4.41. Although the number of links is low in this analysis of first order kinship connections, (only 102), the breakdown of these figures suggests that the minimum estimate of kinship links shown in Table 4.15 could be reasonably representative of all kinship links, although the isolation of Tudhoe may partly be a product of the difficulties of the Family Reconstitution in Tudhoe.

The patterns identified using the Family Reconstitution links can be compared to the results of analysing surnames, the evidence which was added to the Family Reconstitution links to provide a maximum estimate of kinship links. When surname evidence was added to the Family Reconstitution evidence, Brancepeth appeared to be more densely interrelated than Terling.

Figure 4.41 MDS diagram of inter-township links based on kinship relationships between families in the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax (Family Reconstitution evidence)



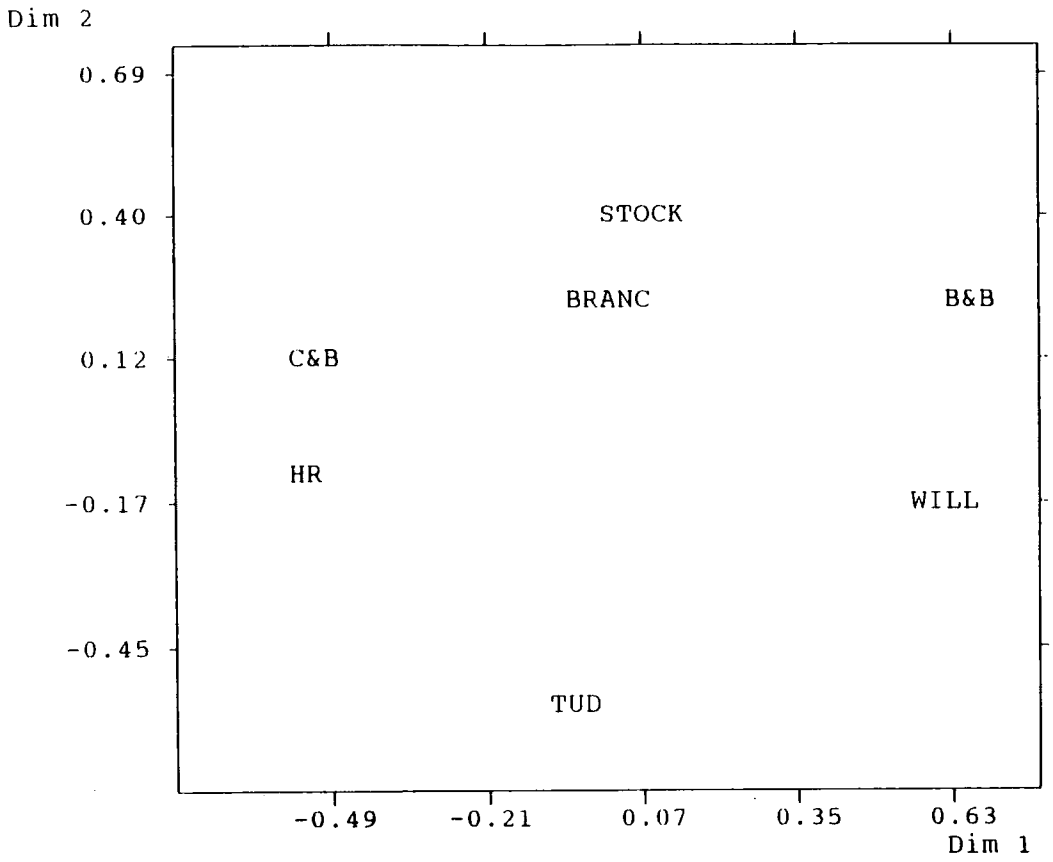
Stress = 0.090 in 2 dimensions.

Elapsed time: 1 second. 1/4/1980 5:56 AM.
UCINET IV 1.63/X Copyright 1991-1995 by Analytic Technologies.

Table 4.16 Kinship links within and between townships: first order links only

Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	28	2	2	2	3	1	2	40
Brandon & Byshottles	2	10	0	0	1	0	2	15
Crook & Billy Row	2	0	2	3	1	0	1	9
Helmington Row	2	0	3	4	0	1	0	10
Stockley	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	7
Tudhoe	1	0	0	1	0	6	0	8
Willington	2	2	1	0	0	0	8	13
TOTALS	40	15	9	10	7	8	13	102

Figure 4.42 MDS diagram of inter-township links based on kinship relationships between families in the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax (first order kinship links only)



Stress = 0.137 in 2 dimensions.

Elapsed time: 1 second. 1/4/1980 6:04 AM.
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Table 4.17 shows that surname matches were not evenly distributed throughout the parish. Although the patterns are not as obvious as for the Family Reconstitution links, it is still clear that the highest numbers of links for Brancepeth, Helmington Row and Tudhoe were within their own townships. Brandon and Byshottles has high numbers of connections with Brancepeth and Stockley, as well as within its own township, Crook and Billy Row's largest number of connections were with Brancepeth and Helmington Row. Stockley had most connections with Brancepeth, Brandon and Byshottles, Willington, and within its own township, and Willington had most connections with Brancepeth, Stockley and within its own township. Shared surnames were concentrated in sub-areas of the parish; in Brancepeth township, in Helmington Row and in Tudhoe. Figure 4.43 shows the group of townships including Brancepeth, Stockley, Brandon and Byshottles and Willington which were connected through surname matches, and also the connection between Helmington Row, and Crook and Billy Row. The isolation of Tudhoe is also shown on this map. Because the surname analysis is not dependent on the quality of the Family Reconstitution, this suggests that the isolation of Tudhoe may not be just a product of inadequate numbers of Family Reconstitution links.

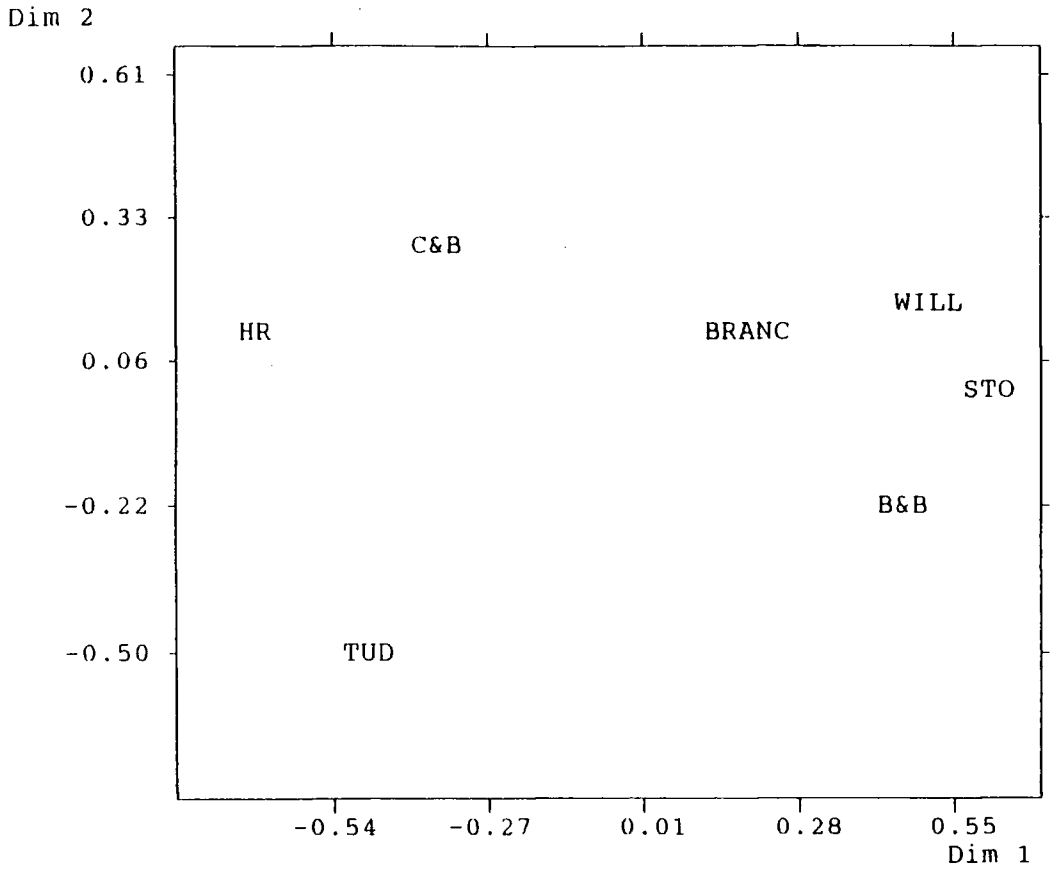
The results of the surname matching process suggests that surname matches genuinely reflect the pattern of known kinship ties in Brancepeth parish. These kinship ties appear to have a spatial dimension within the geographical layout of Brancepeth parish. Kinship links appear to be densest within the neighbourhood of the township, or group of adjacent townships.

Although overall kinship density was not high in Brancepeth parish, within the neighbourhood of the township, or group of adjacent townships,

Table 4.17 Matching surnames within and between townships

Townships	Brancepeth	Brandon & Byshottles	Crook & Billy Row	Helmington Row	Stockley	Tudhoe	Willington	TOTALS
Brancepeth	126	27	9	17	33	16	25	253
Brandon & Byshottles	27	24	1	5	21	12	12	102
Crook & Billy Row	9	1	4	7	3	4	2	30
Helmington Row	17	5	7	26	6	14	10	85
Stockley	33	21	3	6	28	7	20	118
Tudhoe	16	12	4	14	7	38	9	100
Willington	25	12	2	10	20	9	22	100
TOTALS	253	102	30	85	118	100	100	788

Figure 4.43 MDS diagram of inter-township links based on matching surnames between families in the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax



Stress = 0.073 in 2 dimensions.

Elapsed time: 1 second. 1/4/1980 6:14 AM.
UCINET IV 1.63/X Copyright 1991-1995 by Analytic Technologies.

a higher concentration of available kin could be found. This can be further tested by looking for cohesive subgroups of families within the kinship network. The kinship network, based on Family Reconstitution links between households on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment, was analysed for two-clans with at least five member families. The structures of the seven two-clans found are shown in Figures 4.44 to 4.50. The two-clans found in the kinship network show groups of families who were often living in the same township or area of the parish. The first three subgroups and the fifth subgroup lived in the Brancepeth and Stockley area (Figures 4.44 to 4.46 and 4.48). The fourth subgroup (Figure 4.47) had branches in Willington and in Brandon and Byshottles, and the sixth and seventh subgroups (Figures 4.49 and 4.50) were distributed about the parish. The two-clans based on kinship are more cohesive than the two-clans identified in the appraisers, will-witnesses and lenders networks. Kinship created a number of links between different families within these two-clans. Figure 4.51 shows the inter-linkage between the two-clans. Brancepeth and Stockley clearly show up as the part of the parish where the greatest and most complex network of family ties can be found.

Although the strength of relationships within the townships of Brancepeth is quite understandable when it comes to appraising inventories, witnessing wills, or even lending money on trust, it is surprising to find that kinship relationships were more concentrated in the township or local townships areas than in the parish as a whole. The possible explanations for this will be discussed in the final chapter.

The analysis of kinship so far has concentrated on the availability of kin within the parish, and within the township. Although some households were clearly part of a locally based kin network, not all of

Figure 4.44 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 1)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

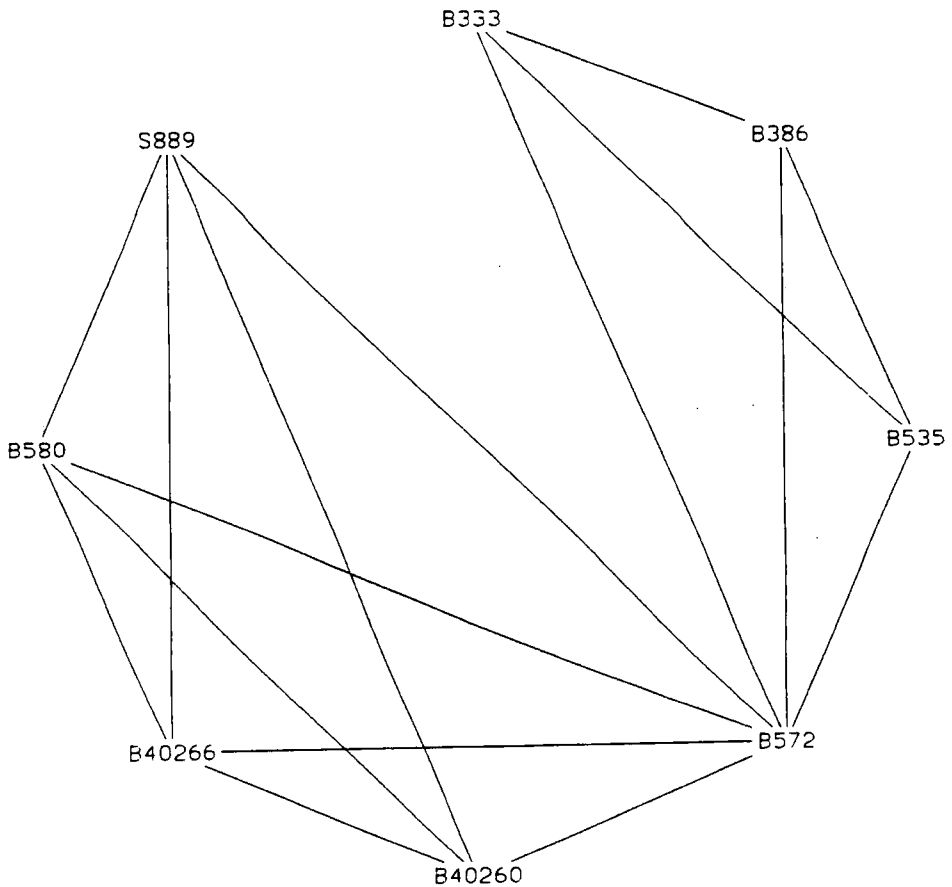


Figure 4.45 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 2)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

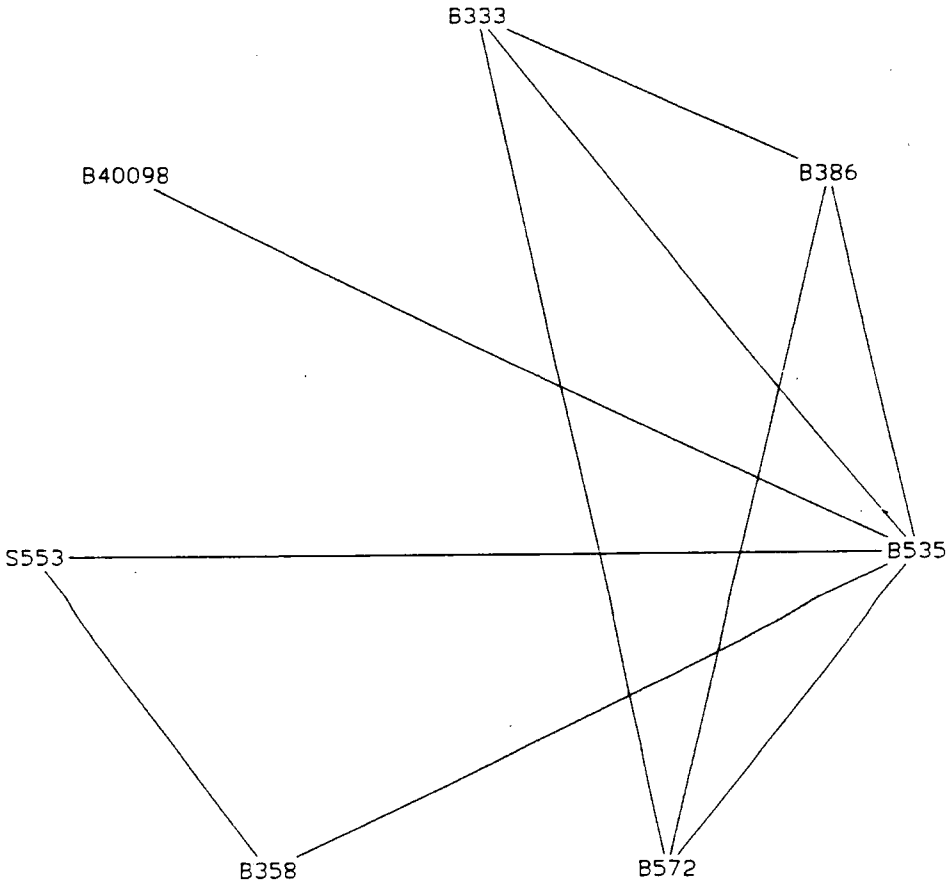


Figure 4.46 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 3)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

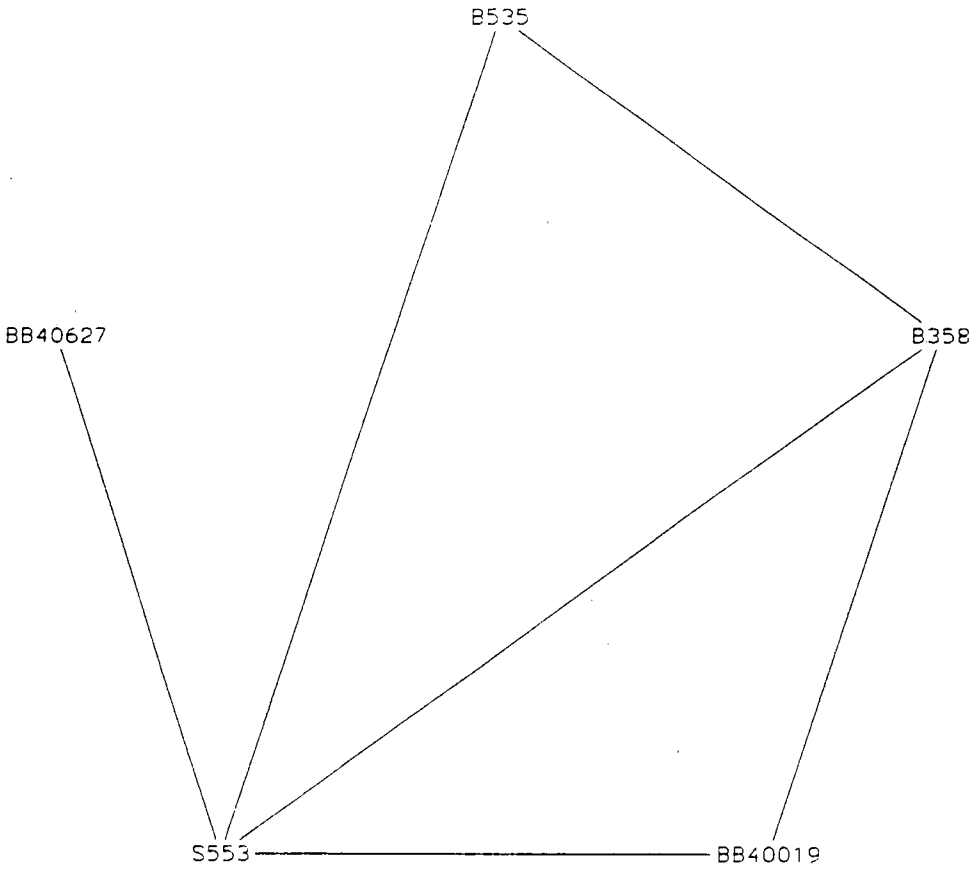


Figure 4.47 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 4)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

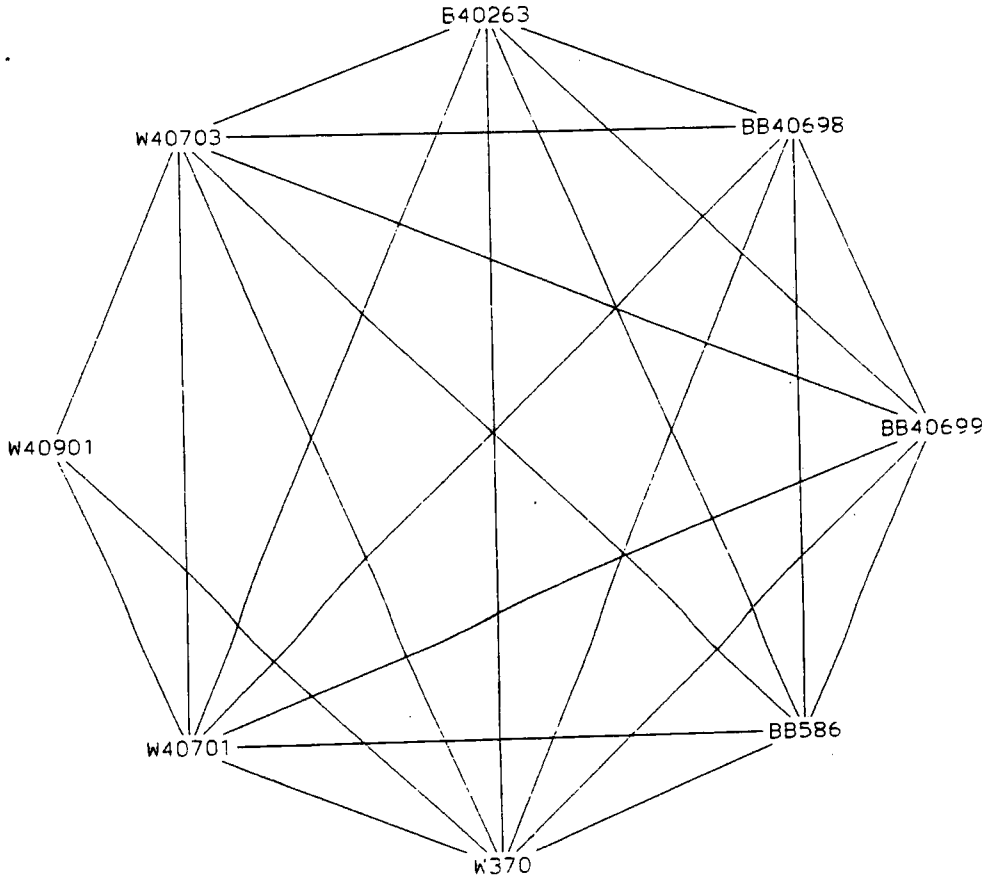


Figure 4.48 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 5)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

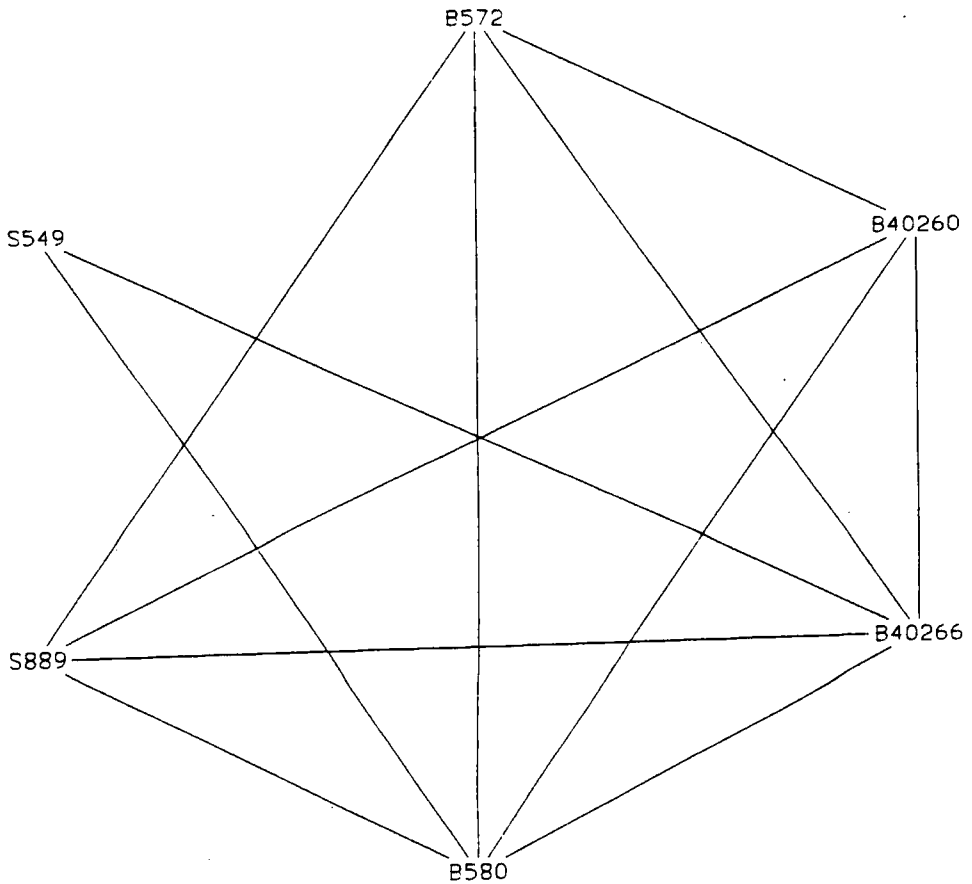


Figure 4.49 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 6)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

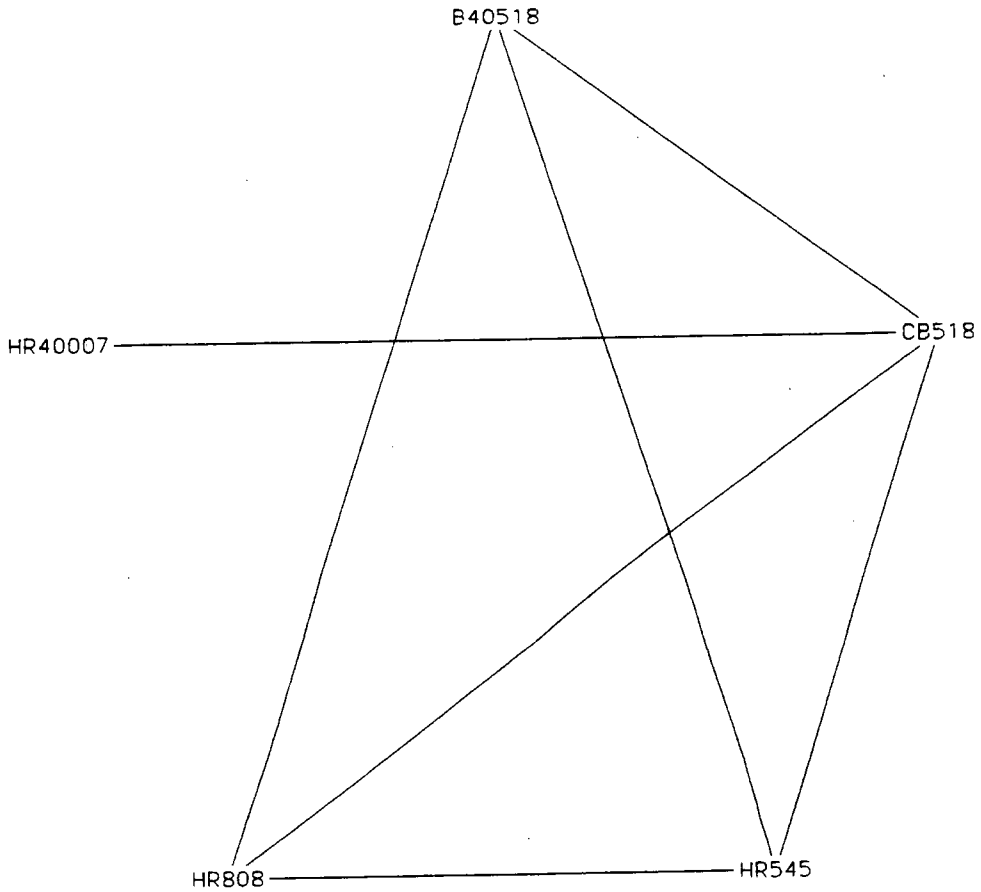


Figure 4.50 Two-clan of families linked by kinship based on Family Reconstitution links (group 7)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington

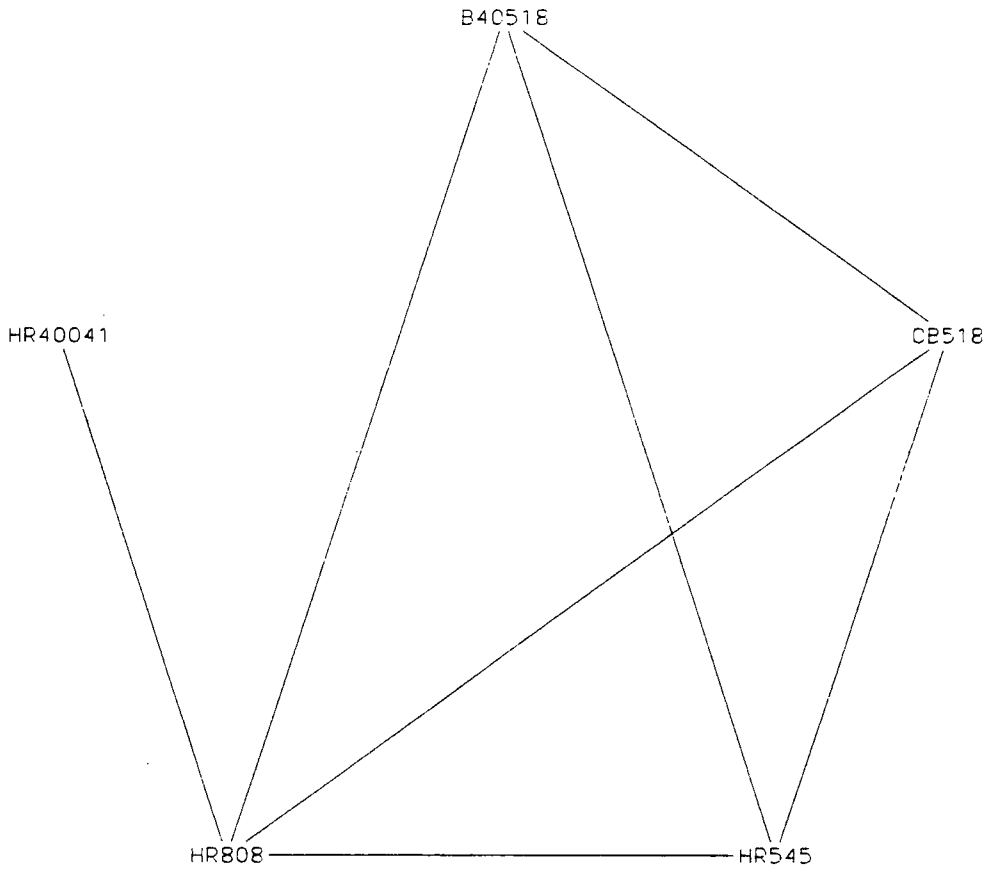
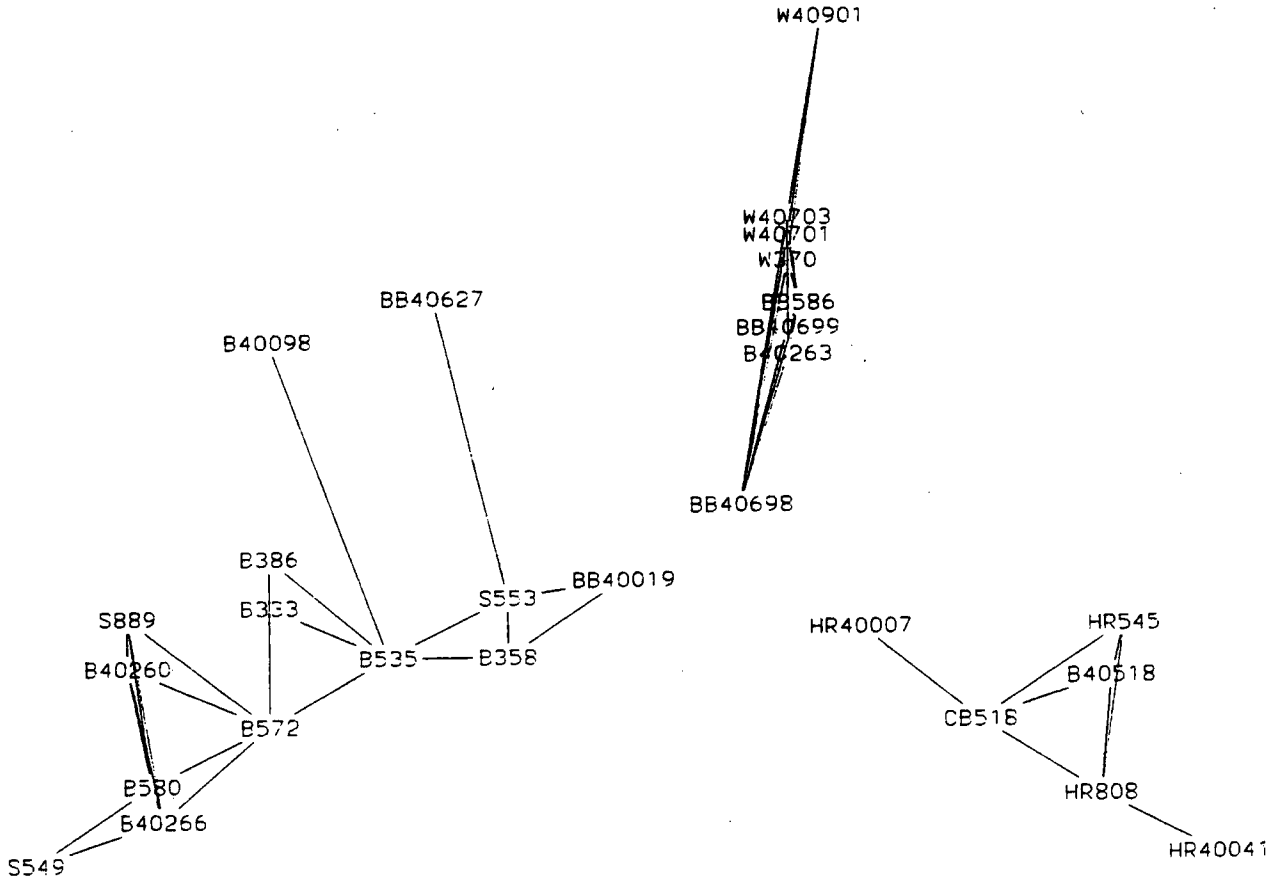


Figure 4.51 Connections between the seven two-clans of families linked by kinship (based on Family Reconstitution)

KEY

Township codes prefix
FRF numbers

B	Brancepeth
BB	Brandon and Byshottles
CB	Crook and Billy Row
HR	Helmington Row
S	Stockley
T	Tudhoe
W	Willington



these relationships may have provided practical support for the individual household. In order to make some assessment of effective kinship relationships in Brancepeth, we must return to the cohesive subgroups discovered within the networks of appraisers, will witnesses and lenders.[67] The Family Reconstitution is unable to provide evidence of distant kinship links, particularly for families living in the early part of the century. However, matching surnames have been shown to mirror the patterns observed from Family Reconstitution links, suggesting that in Brancepeth, they may be a reliable indicator of kinship links. Each two-clan identified within the networks of appraisers, will-witnesses and lenders was therefore checked for surname matches.

Table 4.18 shows the patterns of surname matches within the two-clans found in the different networks. In the appraisers two-clans, thirty-six per cent of nodes shared the same surname as at least one other node in the two-clan. This compares to forty-three per cent of nodes in the will witnesses two-clans, and nineteen per cent in the lenders two-clans. Although the number of nodes in each lenders two-clan was much larger than in the other networks, only a small proportion of the lenders and borrowers had matching surnames within the two-clan. This suggests that the two-clans providing loans of money were not dominated by kinship groups in the parish. In comparison, the high proportion of matching surnames within the two-clans of will-witnesses suggests that these more intimate friendship groups were more likely to include families who were also kin. The two-clans in the appraisers network were slightly less likely to contain kinship connections than the will-witnesses two-clans. These results can be compared to the patterns of inter-linkage between the two-

[67] See D. Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction', Past and Present, No. 113, (1986), p. 44 for an outline of the concept of effective kinship.

Table 4.18 Nodes with matching surnames within the two-clans

	Appraisers network	Will-witnesses network	Lenders network
Number of two-clans	5	9	9
Number of nodes in the two-clans	44	58	117
Number of two-clans containing surname matches	4	8	8
Number of nodes with matching surname in own two-clan	16	25	22
% of nodes with matching surname in own two-clan	36%	43%	19%

clans, as shown in Figures 4.17, 4.28 and 4.40. Will-witnesses were likely to come from within a partly kin-based local group, located within the township. In comparison, loans of money were less likely to come from kin-based groups or from within the township. Appraisers were likely to come from locally-based groups which included some kinship connections, but which had connections with other subgroups. Kin, it would seem, were often part of the local friendship groups which provided will-witnesses and appraisers, but were less likely to be within the social networks which provided loans of money.

In Brancepeth, kin appear to have been among the neighbours who provided help and friendship. However, a court case which survives from Brancepeth suggests that neighbours could sometimes be more supportive than kin.[68] When widow Harrison of Sleetburn House heard her sexual reputation being publicly slandered by the repetition of gossip by Nicholas Briggs of nearby Hareholme, it was the neighbours who helped to prove her innocence. Widow Katherine Harrison was the step-mother-in-law of Nicholas Brigg's wife's sister. In order to establish that Nicholas Briggs was spreading malicious gossip, neighbouring householders took a parallel case against him for calling another neighbour, Matthew Hind, a drunken fellow after an evening dinner which Sir John Calverley had held for his neighbours at Littleburn. The point of the second case seems to be to prove that Nicholas Briggs 'loved to have a hand in ill matters'.[69] Other neighbours, John Rippon of Primroseside and Martin Pickering of East Brandon, confronted the servant who was said to be the source of the rumour against Katherine, and got him to deny it. In this instance, a

[68] DULASC, DDRV/10b, fol. 290-330 verso, fol. 335-340. Cases took place in 1617. I am grateful to Mrs K. Beer for drawing my attention to this case.

[69] DULASC, DDR V/10b, fol. 336 verso.

combination of neighbours took action to protect a long-standing neighbour, against a member of her kin group.

4.7 The size and scale of the local community

Each of the networks analysed in this chapter show a tendency for families to form social networks with families who were mainly from their own township, rather than with families living elsewhere in the parish. This suggests that the basis of community was, in Brancepeth, the township, or pair of adjacent townships, rather than the parish.

In order to test this hypothesis using the whole of each network analysed, the QAP procedure described earlier in this chapter was used. Each matrix was correlated with a matrix which showed the nodes as connected if they lived in the same township. The preference for nodes in the same township tested significant in each of the matrices.[70]

Using Ucinet's Autocorrelation routine, it was possible to get a breakdown of the characteristics of the separate townships, as shown in Table 4.19. The within-group mean is a measure of homophily, the extent to which nodes are linked with other nodes who share the same attributes as themselves. Although the numbers were too small to be statistically significant, Tudhoe showed the highest within-group mean in the appraisers, lenders and witnesses networks. Helmington Row showed the highest within-group mean for surname matches, and Willington had the highest figures for all Family Reconstitution kinship links, and first order Family Reconstitution links. These findings compare well with the figures for kinship density at the township level.

[70] Tested by 5,000 random permutations, using the standard significance level of 0.05.

Table 4.19 Homophily between families from the same townships as shown by within-group means

	TOWNSHIPS						
	Branc	B&B	C&B	HRow	Stock	Tud	Will
NETWORKS							
Appraisers	0.039	0.032	0.036	0.041	0.040	0.069	0.040
Witnesses	0.030	0.039	0.041	0.040	0.047	0.067	0.048
Lenders/Borrowers	0.014	0.014	0.011	0.007	0.008	0.041	0.026
Kinship (Family Reconstitution links)	0.048	0.066	0.048	0.133	0.067	0.107	0.333
Kinship (First order links)	0.040	0.076	0.067	0.200	0.067	0.143	0.267
Surname matches	0.033	0.020	0.036	0.108	0.034	0.030	0.040

Looking at the MDS diagrams of inter-township relationships, some township populations had more social connections with some townships than with others. A recurrent pattern between the different networks was the close proximity of Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row in all the MDS diagrams. Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row had only 48 households between them on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax listing. Where townships had only a small number of households, there were fewer neighbours available to provide the services of will witnessing, appraising, or the lending of money. This factor could explain the close relationship between Crook and Billy Row township and Helmington Row township in all the MDS diagrams of inter-township links. Proportionately less of the links made by families from these townships were made within their own townships. In these small centres of population, the local community appears to have been a larger group of people than were found in either township. Geographically adjacent, the two townships appear to have been acting as a single social community.

In Brancepeth, townships appear to have been able to act as a social community if they had about forty households or more. There may also have been an upper limit on the size of the social community. The largest number of households in any of the townships of Brancepeth was less than a hundred, in Brancepeth itself. Even though Stockley village was just a few hundred yards from Brancepeth village, the two townships do not appear to have operated as one social community. Links between the two townships are not much stronger than between other neighbouring townships, and they were not as well-connected as Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row townships, where the centres of population were geographically much further apart.

In Brancepeth society, families seem to have been happy to concentrate their social relationships with the community of families who lived in the same township as themselves, or with kin and neighbours from adjacent townships where their own township had only a small population. Even though the parish was of such a shape and size that it would have been possible to choose to socialise with families from a different township, Brancepeth families seem to have preferred to maintain the traditional community of the township. Perhaps a parish-wide community was too large a social group to know well. At 342 households, Brancepeth would have been a very large social community for seventeenth-century England. An over-large group of people could be expected to divide themselves into subgroups; in other parishes these subgroups may have been determined by wealth, status, and by religious affiliation. In Brancepeth, the old traditional communities of the townships do not seem to have fully come together into a parish community by the seventeenth century.

Although one end of the parish was within a day's walk of the other end, the landscape contained a number of barriers and aids to communication. These features of the landscape appear to have affected the number and direction of inter-township links, as shown in the MDS diagrams.

Tudhoe's rather socially isolated position probably had much to do with its position on the south side of the River Wear. Few of the inhabitants of the other townships would ever have the need to go to Tudhoe, unless visiting someone living there. Brandon and Byshottles township has few contacts with Willington; the main centres of population in both of these townships would have found themselves divided by the substantial bulk of Brandon Hill, a lonely forested territory to cross. Crook

and Billy Row had few connections with Brandon and Byshottles, even though the two townships were adjacent in the area around Dicken House. However, this boundary between the townships was in a very thinly populated area of each township, near the top of Brandon Hill.

From areas of Helmington Row it would have been possible to see down into the amphitheatre-like valley bottom where the farmhouses of Crook stood, and turning the other way, to look down over the low land of the River Wear's flood plain at Willington in the far distance. Although people in Willington could not see Crook, the hill-top of Helmington Row could have acted as a linking factor, as shown on several of the MDS diagrams. All in all, the social networks of inter-township relationships bear a good resemblance to the distances involved in travelling between townships, and the difficulty or ease of those journeys.

In this chapter it has been possible to show that in Brancepeth parish, in the seventeenth century, the social divides were based on neighbourhood areas, as defined by townships. These ancient social communities had survived into the early modern world, in this northern rural parish. Neighbours were important. They were there to provide help in times of trouble, at times of illness and death, at happier moments such as weddings and christenings, and were often the source of loans of money. It has long been argued that neighbours were a very important source of social support in early modern English society, but there has been a shortage of quantitative evidence to support this argument, or to define the size of a neighbourhood community. This chapter has been able to provide some evidence.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Discussion

5.1 The contribution of this study

In this final chapter, I will attempt to evaluate the contribution which this study can make to our understanding of early modern society. The chapter will outline the main conclusions of this research, in terms of the scale of the local community in Brancepeth, the pattern of kinship links, and the evidence of neighbourhood relationships, including a discussion of additional evidence from Brancepeth which helps to place the findings from the social network analysis work into the wider context of social relationships within the local community. The chapter will consider Brancepeth in the context of the modernisation which was taking place in other early modern communities. The study will be discussed as a contribution to a whole series of theses, books and articles inspired by the community studies of the 1970s which were mentioned in chapter one. Finally, the chapter will make suggestions for further research.

5.2 The scale and structure of local communities in Brancepeth

The results of this study quite clearly point to the existence of a number of largely separate social communities within the parish of Brancepeth in the seventeenth century. The evidence of the networks based on witnessing wills, appraising inventories, money loaned on trust, and kinship all show that these social ties were concentrated within the township, rather than evenly distributed throughout the parish. In Brancepeth, the parish seems to have been too large, in terms of population, and possibly in terms of landscape, to operate as a single social community. These findings suggest that where parishes contained a number of townships, as was the case in many areas of northern

England, the local community in the early modern period may more likely be found at the level of the township rather than the parish. However, parishes and townships vary a great deal in size in different parts of northern England. The size of the parish and township populations, the geographical extent of the parish and other factors may be significant.

Not all the social connections discovered in the parish were contained within the townships. The MDS diagrams which show the relationships of townships to each other, based on the quantity of inter-township links, have strong similarities with the geographical layout of the parish. Although there are few instances where townships are shown to be closely linked, the links between townships which have been observed tended to be strongest with adjacent townships. When making links with families outside the township, the families who lived in nearby townships were normally preferred. Inter-township links also reflect the influence of landscape on social connections. Tudhoe's position, separated from the rest of the parish by the River Wear, was reflected in the MDS diagrams.

Patterns of interaction between families in the networks show that social communities in Brancepeth parish were not purely based on residential propinquity. The main centres of population in Brancepeth and Stockley townships were about ten minutes walk from each other, but the two townships were not closely linked by social network connections. The MDS diagrams show them operating as two largely separate social communities, rather than one integrated community of about 140 households. Brancepeth, the largest township, had a population of less than a hundred households. Only the two townships of Crook and Billy Row, and Helmington Row seem to have had too few households to form separate social communities; in all the networks analysed, they are shown as closely-relating townships. Together, Helmington Row, and Crook and

Billy Row had a population of about forty households. In the parish of Brancepeth, the size of the social community seems to have ranged from about forty to one hundred households. In the Brancepeth context, a community of between forty and a hundred households seems to have been able to provide much of the social support needed by households, as exemplified by will witnessing, appraising of inventories, and loans of money made without written guarantees.

Some kinds of practical assistance were more easily obtained from neighbours than others. Although each type of network analysed contained clear evidence of township communities, there were differences in the structures of the networks. Stockley and Brancepeth were more closely inter-related by kinship connections and through loans of money than in the networks based on will-witnessing and appraising inventories. The characteristics of different kinds of social networks became particularly apparent when Ucinet was used to identify cohesive subgroups within the networks. The networks based on will-witnessing identified groups of families which rarely had overlapping membership with other subgroups. The appraisers network produced more families which were included in more than one subgroup. In the lenders network, there were a number of families who were lending and borrowing money between subgroups. It appears to have been sometimes necessary to use a wider range of contacts for loans of money, including people from beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the township. In comparison, it was rarely necessary to look for suitable people to witness a will outside the more self-contained subgroups of friends and kin which were based within the neighbourhood.

The neighbourly structure of social networks in Brancepeth suggests that most residents of the parish had not developed personal

communities of friends and contacts which were spread over a wider geographical area, like the personal networks of a modern society.[1] The parish was not so large as to make it impossible to make friendships with families from other townships, had the families wanted to do this. The evidence of godparent connections show that long-distance contacts could be maintained. However, because of the self-sufficient nature of much of the farming going on many families may not have needed to make many contacts in the wider social world beyond their township. In comparison, there were many reasons to invest in social relationships with neighbours, whose practical help and co-operation in the working world of the countryside could be vital to the survival of families who lived on such small amounts of land.

5.3 Wealth, religion and social subgroups

In Brancepeth parish, the social subgroups discovered were mainly made up of groups of neighbours within the townships. These neighbourly social groups can be contrasted to the pattern of social relationships found in Terling, where the better-off Puritan villagers formed a recognisable social group within the parish.[2] It is difficult to test whether Brancepeth had any additional cross-parish social subgroups based on wealth or religion. As has been argued in chapter three, Brancepeth did not have the same kind of social hierarchy as was present in Terling. Because there were few families who could be considered to be even of yeomanry status, it was not possible to identify sizeable social groups from the gentry, the yeoman farmers, the husbandmen and the labourers,

[1] See B. Wellman, 'The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 84, (1979), p. 1214.

[2] K. Wrightson and D. Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village, (Oxford, 1995), p. 159.

in order to investigate whether there was more social interaction within these groups than between groups. Although there were clearly a large number of recusant families living in Brancepeth parish, there are no religious records which indicate that these people inter-related with each other as a social group.

Although the social hierarchy of the parish, and the nature of recusancy makes it difficult to assess whether there could have been parish-wide social groups based on wealth or religion in Brancepeth, the evidence of the two-clans discovered in the social networks analysed can provide some indicators. In none of the two-clans of families discovered in the social networks was there any suggestion that the subgroup was made up of wholly of families who could be described as gentry. In the subgroups which were discovered in Brancepeth, gentry had connections with non-gentry families, and relationships existed between families in differing financial circumstances. These neighbourhood-based networks seem to have functioned between effective if not actual equals. The bonds of neighbourliness seem to have been more significant than the differentials of wealth or poverty.

Some assessment has been made of the possibilities of parish-wide religious subgroups in Brancepeth. Very little evidence of non-conformists was found within the parish. The small numbers listed in 1669 were Quakers, Anabaptists and Puritans. In 1669 there were no notes of nonconformist meetings being held in Brancepeth parish, although there were reports of meetings in many other parishes in County Durham.[3] The only religious affiliation which appears to have been markedly strong in Brancepeth parish was Catholic recusancy. However, in this study, there

[3] DULASC, Dean and Chapter Post-Dissolution Muniments Item 29 Box 30, Non-conformist meeting certificates and reports.

was no evidence found to suggest that recusant families may have acted as a separate social group within the parish. Recusants were concentrated in the townships of Brandon and Byshottles, and Tudhoe, but were also resident in Brancepeth, Crook and Billy Row, Willington and Stockley townships.[4] In Brancepeth parish, recusants were not concentrated in a particular part of the parish, they were resident in most neighbourhoods. A number were closely associated with the Church of England. Amongst the families of female recusants, there were husbands who paid for pews in the church. The presence of recusant families in the same two-clans as apparently conformist parishioners is suggestive of recusant sympathy within at least some sections of the parish population. The recusant population had not excluded themselves or been excluded from neighbourly social networks with conformist families.

The recusants of Brancepeth, like the non-conformists which Spufford found in Cambridgeshire, held no religious institutional power.[5] They were therefore in a very different social position than the group of powerful Puritan yeomen in Terling. Different religious affiliations within the population of Brancepeth do not appear to have been socially divisive. Brancepeth remained a neighbourhood-based community. The parish had not undergone the economic polarisation between prosperous and poor families which Terling had experienced by the seventeenth century. The structure of the social networks within Brancepeth is consistent with the economic and social hierarchy of the parish. In parishes like Terling, where wealth differentials and the development of larger farms had the

[4] DDCL, Sharp MSS Vol. 110, Lists of recusants 1628, 1689, fols. 5-11, 19-24, 70-89; DULASC, CC 221308, List of recusants 1629; C. M. Fraser and K. Emsley, (eds.), Durham Quarter Sessions Rolls, Surtees Society, Vol. 199, (1991), p. 332; A. M. Foster, (ed.), Durham's Entries on the Recusant Roll 1636-7, in Surtees Society Vol. 175, (1965), pp. 164-168; DCRO, D/Gr/356, List of recusants, 1615; PRO, DURH/3/206, List of recusants 1624.

[5] M. Spufford, Contrasting Communities, (Cambridge, 1974).

effect of dividing a community into something akin to a small class of landowners and a large class of labourers whose economic interests were at odds with each other, parish-wide networks between those who were of a similar status could be expected. The economic inequalities which helped to create these separate social groups were largely absent in Brancepeth society.

5.4 Kinship

Kinship ties were investigated within the parish of Brancepeth using the evidence of the Family Reconstitution and shared surnames. Because similar methods have been used in other historical studies, it was possible to compare estimates of kinship density within Brancepeth directly with the results of previous studies of kinship density within parish populations.

Taking the parish as one unit, there appears to be no significantly greater kinship density in Brancepeth than in Terling in Essex. At first this seems surprising, as Terling's kinship network is perceived as 'relatively loose', associated with high geographical mobility and exogamous marriages.[6] Brancepeth shows remarkable stability of families, due to the security of leasing arrangements. Exogamy rates, from the small amount of evidence available, do not seem to be high. In Brancepeth parish, high kinship density might have been expected.

The low kinship density figures for Brancepeth parish may be partly due to the shorter period of Family Reconstitution in Brancepeth, and the restriction of minimum estimates of kin links to the results produced by Family Reconstitution. Nevertheless, there are relatively more kinship

[6] K. Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English village: Terling, Essex 1500 - 1700', in R. M. Smith, (Ed.), Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 332.

connections at township level than across the parish as a whole. This pattern was also mirrored by the analysis of matching surnames, which were not evenly distributed across the parish. Much of the recent literature on early modern society emphasises population mobility.[7] The evidence of this study suggests that in Brancepeth there had been limited migration of males from their home townships to other townships within the parish by the late seventeenth century.

The tendency for families to live in the same townships as their kin raises interesting questions and speculations. One possible explanation could be the dividing of landholdings and houses to provide for children. However, comparison between the number of leasehold tenements in 1570 and 1607 shows that the number of tenements had increased from 194 in 1570 to only 227 in 1607. Some of these additional tenements were created from the commons.[8] The amounts of land being farmed by many families in 1607 seem too small to support one family, certainly too small to be divided to provide for several children over the course of the seventeenth century. A second possible explanation could be that widowed parents may have subdivided houses to accommodate their married children without dividing the family landholding. There is some evidence of larger houses being divided to accommodate two households, but many families would have lived in cottages with only three rooms, the forehouse, the backhouse and the loft. Such houses would have been very difficult to subdivide.[9]

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[7] See summary in D. Hey, The Oxford Guide to Family History, (Oxford, 1998), p. 62.

[8] PRO, LR/2/192, Survey of Brancepeth, 1607.

[9] See PRO, PROB/11/247, Will of John Harrison 1655.

Another possibility is that before 1570, there may have been a tendency for kin to have landholdings within the same township, and because of security of tenure, over the course of the century, these families may not have moved within the parish, or moved away from the parish. In these circumstances, there would have been few opportunities for newcomers to move in. If neighbours were preferred as marriage partners this could also increase kinship density at the level of the township. Out of a very small sample of marriage choices, approximately twenty per cent of these marriages were found to be endogamous within the township, suggesting that marriages between neighbouring families could have contributed to kinship density at the township level. A further possibility is that kin actively chose to live in the same township as fellow kin. Where two or more family groups had separate landholdings in the same township, they may have been able to farm in a co-operative, peasant-like manner, if they were allocated nearby strips of land, and if they had grazing rights and closes in the same area. This may have been one of the ways in which the tenants managed to survive on such small amounts of land.

Because of the manorial customs of hereditary leaseholds which controlled the inheritance of land in Brancepeth, eldest sons normally had the opportunity to live in their home township to farm the main family landholding. Although the English land law never recognised collective family ownership of land, only individuals' property rights, in Brancepeth, the right to land in a township was the privilege and the responsibility of the head of the family to hand on through the generations. Continuing to hold land in the home township may have been particularly important for some families. In open field farming, this attachment was not to a particular piece of land, but to the right to farm a certain amount of land within the town fields. Family groups which concentrated in particular

townships over the course of the seventeenth century may have done so partly because they had a sense of the importance of maintaining the lineage of the family land. They may also have formed a special bond with the familiar landscape where they had grown up, and with the kin and neighbours which formed the social community of the township.

There has been considerable debate about the significance of kinship in the social support mechanisms of early modern society. This has been particularly difficult to assess at the level of the non-literate poorer families.[10] The matching surnames found within the two-clans of families in the social networks based on witnessing wills and appraising inventories are therefore of interest. They suggest that kin were often included in these socially supportive networks. However, the lower proportions of shared surnames within the lenders two-clans suggest that in Brancepeth, kin were less likely to provide loans of money. In Brancepeth this may have been because of shortage of resources rather than unwillingness to help out.

Although kinship was significant within the two-clans discovered in the appraisers and will-witnesses networks, there was no suggestion that the two-clans based in the townships were wholly made up of kin. The kinship connections between Hearth Tax families were more numerous within the township than in the parish as a whole, but the kinship densities discovered at township level were not high enough to suggest that most neighbours were also kin. In Brancepeth, both kin and neighbours offered social support.

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[10] See for example, D. Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', Past and Present, No. 113, (1986); M. Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Later 16th and early 17th Centuries', History Workshop, No. 10, (1980); K. Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex, 1550-1700', in R. M. Smith, (ed.), Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle, (Cambridge, 1984).

5.5 Neighbourly relationships

The discovery of socially-supportive networks within the neighbourhood of the township shows that in Brancepeth, good neighbours clearly existed. These good relationships need to be viewed in the wider context of social relationships within local communities which included conflict as well as practical assistance. If the township was the basic unit of community in seventeenth century Brancepeth, was it also the arena for conflict and hostility? In order to attempt some assessment of this possibility, it is necessary to look at mechanisms for dealing with disputes within the parish and the township, and surviving evidence of conflict.

The old system of frankpledge made townships responsible for law and order within their lands. Not only were township constables to catch run-away criminals within their lands, they were also to deal with offences committed by residents of the township.[11] Seventeenth-century methods of maintaining law and order required householders to be prepared to confront the antisocial behaviour of other members of their community. This could be done by assisting the township constable when arresting offenders, by reporting offences at the manor court, or to local Justices of the Peace, or where appropriate, telling the churchwardens so that the offenders could be corrected at the next Archdeacon's visit. Other strategies were to take community action to put pressure on a bad neighbour, using rituals of charivari, or to remove the support systems which were normally extended to good neighbours.

[11] F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland, The History of English Law, (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 564, 568-70.

There are no reports of charivaris taking place in Brancepeth parish. The manorial court records which survive contain over a hundred complaints, but these mainly deal with encroachments on common land and rights, and failure to meet obligations to mend roads, hedges and scour ditches. Only two violent assaults are recorded, one in 1610 and one in 1697.[12] Three scolding offences were recorded in 1609 and 1610.[13] Although the Quarter Sessions records are not suitable for numerical analysis because they are so badly damaged and incomplete, a survey of the indictments from 1600-1688 produced over 50 instances of Brancepeth people who were indicted. There were no more than ten of these cases which could be described as assault.[14] There were very few accusations of stealing from neighbours. Unfortunately, no assize records survive to indicate murders or cases of witchcraft, but other evidence mentions the execution of a Tudhoe man for manslaughter, although the details of the case are unavailable.[15] There are few defamation cases between people from Brancepeth in the Consistory Court depositions which cover the years 1603-1634.[16] On the basis of the evidence which survives, Brancepeth does not seem to have been an unduly violent or conflict-ridden place in which to live in the seventeenth century. Most of the complaints made about individuals in the Manorial Court and the Quarter Sessions are more to do with the day to day business of farming, trading, property, recusancy, and occasional poaching.

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[12] PRO, SC/171/3, Brancepeth Manor Court; DCRO, D/Br/E13, Brancepeth Manor Court 1697.

[13] PRO, SC/171/3; DCRO, D/Br/E11, Brancepeth Manor Court 1676-7; DCRO, D/Be/E13.

[14] Emsley and Fraser, Durham Quarter Sessions; DCRO, QS/I/9-43, Quarter Sessions Indictments 1625-88; DULASC, Durham Chancery Misc. Box 4, Quarter Sessions Indictments 1628-9.

[15] DCRO, D/Gr/354, Copy of inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614; PRO, SP/15/40 (1614).

[16] DULASC, DDRV/8 - V/12 and Box 414, Durham Consistory Court Depositions.

Considering that many social relationships were worked out in the small world of the township, the lack of conflict in the court records is surprising. How were the neighbours of the townships in Brancepeth able to maintain the peace, when they had few outside forces to help them? Because Brancepeth parish lacked a sizeable gentry group, it also lacked numbers of resident Justices of the Peace. Only the Calverley family were resident in the parish, although there were Justices living in neighbouring parishes. Most of the townships of Brancepeth were therefore left largely to their own devices for the maintenance of law and order.

Where a core of families had lived for generations in the same township, the social credit which could be built up over the years was worth keeping. In order to keep on good terms with the neighbours, there were many expectations which had to be met. The networks of links between families living within the same township may have been as much a matter of social obligation than of personal friendship choices. When a long-standing neighbour asked for a loan of money, it could have been hard to refuse if everyone knew that the lender had money available, perhaps from the recent sale of a cow, for example. The refusal of a loan could indicate dislike or distrust, which could upset other social networks within these small-scale societies. There might be long-term disadvantages if social credit was not built up and maintained with as many neighbours as possible. Defamation cases in the church courts suggest that a good reputation amongst the neighbours was an asset to be protected.[17] Social offences could destroy good reputations, and could seriously affect the ability of a family to receive help and co-operation from other neighbours. By being part of the supportive social networks of

[17] D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The Making of an Industrial Society, (Oxford, 1991), p. 281.

good neighbourliness, families were able to insure themselves against many of the problems which could be caused by bad neighbours. Supportive neighbours could testify to the good reputations of fellow neighbours, and could arbitrate in disputes. The social credit and social networks built up by good neighbours may have helped to maintain law and order in the community, by inhibiting anti-social behaviour, and by creating a culture of conformity to neighbourhood obligations.

5.6 Brancepeth: a traditional community in a modernising world

In 1597, the Bishop of Durham described his diocese in terms of 'these rude and remote parts' in a letter to Lord Burghley.[18] Mervyn James painted a picture of County Durham as socially backward at the start of the early modern period, but undergoing rapid change with the switch of power from the old lineage families to the new coal-owning families.[19] If anywhere, this switch should have been felt in Brancepeth.

It was about sixty years after the fall of the Earls of Westmorland that Brancepeth castle, parks, and most of the lordship was bought by one of the families who had experienced a most dramatic rise to fortune through prosperity in the coal trade of Tyneside. The grandfather of the purchaser of Brancepeth castle had been a blacksmith in Gateshead. The family had invested well in the coal trade, and made their way into the upper echelons of the political elites on the Newcastle town council, as a result of trading successes.[20]

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[18] CBP, Vol. 2, p. 334, (1597).

[19] M. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, (Oxford, 1974), pp. 108, 182-3.

[20] DNB, entry for Sir Ralph Cole (1625 - 1704).

When the Cole family came to Brancepeth castle, it would not have been surprising if they had modernised the old ways of the Brancepeth families. They might have been expected to increase fines and rents, encourage greater profitability from the land by consolidating holdings and enclosing commons, and to re-negotiate the traditional customs of the manor, in order to maximise their investments, as they had done in the coal trade. Brancepeth could have become the rural counterpart of modernising Whickham.[21]

However, the evidence of the estate papers suggests that the Coles took quite the opposite attitude to Brancepeth.[22] Having 'arrived' in their country seat, they seem to have been content, in Brancepeth, to act like traditional Lords of the Manor, continuing the customs of the manor, including the manor courts, and even the medieval-style views of frankpledge, up until the end of the seventeenth century.[23]

Whether losses on the Brancepeth estate caused the Cole family to lose their fortune, or whether the gentlemanly patronage of artists, or business problems in Newcastle were the real cause of the family's downfall will probably have to remain at the level of speculation. While the family's coal mining dealings remained profitable in Newcastle, they would not have needed to 'modernise' Brancepeth. In the 1670s and 1680s, they seemed to prefer to use Brancepeth land as collateral for loans of money, rather than as a means of raising income for the family through rents and fines. [24] Their policies seem to have left Brancepeth relatively undisturbed

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[21] Levine and Wrightson, Whickham.

[22] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue.

[23] DCRO, D/Br/E3, Brancepeth Manor Court 1696; DCRO, D/Br/E13, Brancepeth Manor Court, 1697.

[24] DCRO, Brancepeth Estate Catalogue, Deeds section.

by the commercial pressures of an increasingly market-orientated industrialising society.

The Brancepeth smallholders would have had difficulty raising sufficient cash to take on larger amounts of land to raise themselves above the status of a husbandman, to produce larger amounts of surplus produce to sell at market. Because of the policies of the landowners who held the majority of land in the parish, most of the land remained unenclosed until the eighteenth century.[25] The small amounts of land farmed by most of the tenants of the parish would have created little work for day labourers. The main opportunities for additional income from labouring would have come, as it had done in the past, from labouring on the freehold land belonging to the larger estates in the area, such as at Littleburn, and Holywell, and some of the smaller gentry estates like Ivesley. In these circumstances, wealth differentials were unlikely to have caused a new style of social groups within the parish, based on up-and-coming yeomen and a separate group of landless labourers. In Brancepeth, the traditional divisions remained, between the gentry estates and the smallholding tenants.

Although elsewhere in seventeenth-century England, the horizons of parish life were being widened by population mobility, an increasingly commercial market economy, and the growth of religious groups which gathered their followers from a wide geographical area, in Brancepeth the social horizons of life remained largely limited to the township. The economic and social changes which caused villagers to meet new people were largely absent from Brancepeth in the seventeenth century.

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[25] P. Brassley, 'Northumberland and Durham' in J. Thirsk, (ed.), The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. 5(1) Regional Farming Systems, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 50; W. Fordyce, History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, (Newcastle, 1857), p. 431; DCRO, D/Br/E30, Description of the Manor of Brancepeth 1795-6.

The presence of long-standing kinship groups within the townships may have strengthened a sense of local community, particularly among the households which were also long-standing neighbours. The absence of a Puritan group within the parish may have been more significant than the presence of those who adhered to the 'old religion'. In Brancepeth, the old ways of thinking and acting received very little challenge from the modernising processes happening elsewhere. The significant social groups within the parish population were based on residence in the same township. The traditional medieval social community of the 'villata', the families who farmed the lands of a township, was still relevant in seventeenth-century Brancepeth.[26]

Brancepeth's particular history could be an explanation for the traditional neighbourhood societies which operated within the townships. The Earl of Westmorland's 'semi-feudal' influence may have continued for a long time in Brancepeth, only to be picked up and continued by the new industrialist owners of the castle and estate. Ideas of good lordship fitted comfortably with a theory of social obligations towards neighbours.

5.7 A parish study

A single parish study can produce evidence which can be compared to the findings of previous community studies if similar sources and methods are used. This study has used sources and methods which have been used in other parish studies, and which could be replicated in future studies. Population turnover has been estimated using surname evidence, and the population of the parish has been calculated based on

[26] Pollock and Maitland, History of English Law, p. 563.

a number of 'snapshot' sources available for the period 1563-1666. The parish register counts of baptisms, marriages and burials have been analysed to produce explanations about the changes within the population structure over the course of the seventeenth century. As in other parish studies, it has been possible to make some assessment of the local society in which the parish had connections, using the evidence of marriage horizons. A range of documents has been used to describe the landscape and to reconstruct the economic structure of the parish. The background history and the religious culture of the parish have been investigated using more traditional methods of historical research. Figures on kinship density have been calculated within the parish, and also within the township. All this information makes it possible to compare Brancepeth more easily with other parishes.

This study of Brancepeth has used the Cambridge Group's method of Family Reconstitution, allowing direct comparisons with other Family Reconstitutions produced by this method. The Brancepeth Family Reconstitution has been accompanied by a record linking project, covering the main classes of records which are available for parish studies in the early modern period. Few parishes have been reconstructed using both Family Reconstitution and record linkage. Although in some parishes the 'total reconstitution method' of matching other records to Family Reconstitution raises problems, in Brancepeth it was possible to link high percentages of other parish records to the Family Reconstitution.[27] The families who appear on the Brancepeth Family Reconstitution have been shown to be quite representative of the

[27] S. King, 'Power, representation and the historical individual: problems with sources for record linkage in two Yorkshire townships, 1650-1820', The Local Historian, Vol. 27, No. 2, (1997); P. Sharpe, 'The Total Reconstitution Method: A Tool for Class-Specific Study?', Local Population Studies, No. 44, (1990).

population identified in wills, inventories, manorial tenancies, Hearth Tax records and a church seating plan.

Because few studies have used both Family Reconstitution and record linkage, there is a dearth of published information about the practicalities of linking different classes of records to a Family Reconstitution study. This study has produced valuable evidence on the proportions of other kinds of parish records which can be linked to a Family Reconstitution of one hundred years in length. From the demographic point of view, the study has provided information about the characteristics of the kind of families which the Family Reconstitution of Brancepeth represents. It has been possible to show that the Family Reconstitution population were predominantly cottagers and poorer husbandmen, farming very small amounts of land, and that recusant families appear in the Family Reconstitution.

However, the contribution of this study is not limited to replicating the methods developed in previous studies of historical communities, or to providing comparative results. In recent years historical debate about the study of local history has opened up new challenges, in particular, the discovery of local societies within geographical areas.[28] In this research, as well as producing an in-depth study of Brancepeth in the seventeenth century, I have developed a method of investigating social networks which can be used to discover social communities within geographical areas. At the time of writing this thesis, there are no published studies of early modern parishes which use network analysis to discover social communities. However, the methods used in this study could be replicated

[28] See J. D. Marshall, The Tyranny of the Discrete, (Aldershot, 1997), and C. Pythian-Adams, 'Introduction', in C. Phythian-Adams, (ed.), Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850, (Leicester, 1993).

in future parish studies, in order to put the Brancepeth findings into context.

5.8 Some directions for further research

In a Ph. D. study, it is often not possible to make full use of the data available from a single well-documented parish in the early modern period. Although this study has made use of a wide range of evidence, there were other documents collected which could not be incorporated into the analysis presented in this thesis. More significantly, there were limitations to the different kinds of analysis which could be performed with the main sources used in the thesis, because of the time involved in processing information from such large collections of records. In this thesis it was only possible to reconstruct some aspects of the social world of a single parish in the seventeenth century. Much remains which could be done.

This research raises the question of whether the pattern of communities in Brancepeth is typical of northern parishes which contain a number of townships. Marshall believes that upland townships in the north of England would have 'a multitude of ties with neighbouring townships and with the main or parish church', but he has not been able to cite any studies which support these suggestions.[29] Studies of other northern parishes containing townships or other subdivisions, such as quarters, are clearly needed. Brancepeth may not be typical of northern agricultural parishes which were more market-orientated, and where there were greater divisions between the better-off and the poor.

[29] Marshall, Tyranny, p. 70.

In Brancepeth, matching surnames were concentrated in particular townships rather than distributed evenly between the townships of the parish. The surnames network mirrored the patterns of inter-township links shown between the households linked by Family Reconstitution evidence. This suggests that surname evidence could act as an indicator of kinship connections. This indicator could be used to help to select other parishes which could be productively compared to Brancepeth. Surname sets are available for townships in records such as the Protestation Returns and the Hearth Tax assessments. These kinds of records could be used to identify other parishes where kinship and other social ties may have been centred on the township. Surname distributions could also identify contrasting parishes where kinship ties appear to have been more widely dispersed within the parish.

If the study of Brancepeth could be continued for a longer period, it may be possible to observe the decline of township-based communities, as other social and economic changes affected the parish. The Brancepeth Family Reconstitution could, at some future date, be extended into the eighteenth century. If it was extended for a much longer period it could be used to provide a full demographic profile of the parish. The additional information gained would make it possible to investigate some of the questions raised by the results of this research over a longer time period.

In this study kinship groups were found to be closely associated with particular townships. These results were based on kinship links between households shown on the combined 1665 and 1666 Hearth Tax assessment. Further detailed work using the kinship links found in the whole of the Family Reconstitution may help to explain why kinship groups were so closely associated with particular areas of the parish.

It could be profitable to check the marriage dates of eldest sons with the dates of the deaths of their fathers. In a parish where the householders had such small amounts of land, it must have been difficult for families to gather together the resources for their children to marry. Inheritance of the family land may have provided the opportunity for eldest sons to marry and to form a new household in the home township.

The next question to investigate would be whether younger siblings settled in their home township when they married. The Family Reconstitution could provide statistics on the proportion of younger siblings who lived in their home township after marriage, in comparison to those who settled elsewhere in the parish. For the siblings who initially moved to different townships within the parish when they married, it may be possible to discover the stage in the family life-cycle when they returned to their home township, if they returned at all. The proportion who returned home may have done so because they inherited a tenancy from another family member, or because they actively sought to move nearer their kin when a suitable tenancy became available for other reasons.

Further work on kinship in Brancepeth could be done using the Brancepeth probate records. Wills could be analysed for references to kin, using the Family Reconstitution to help to identify the kin who are included in the wills, but were not described as kin. If the bequests in wills show a pattern of preference for kin who lived within the same township, it would suggest that these bequests were given as a result of supportive social networks with these kin, rather than out of an obligation to pass on family property without partiality.

The social structure of recusancy in Brancepeth could be further explored by using the Family Reconstitution to trace intermarriages between recusant families. Detailed study of the social networks and kinship links of these families could help to explain whether recusants were developing a separate social community within the parish during the course of the seventeenth century.

Having established that the social networks examined were more cohesive at township rather than parish level, in future work on Brancepeth it may be possible to detect smaller sub-communities of neighbours within the townships. Using the same networks of connections, identifying individual farms in some parts of the parish, it may be possible to find higher levels of cohesion between groups of about ten families living in a neighbourhood, similar to the old tithings in other parts of England.[30] This kind of analysis could be possible in the Brandon and Byshottles township, and in Crook and Billy Row. In these areas smaller cohesive subgroups could be used to try to identify the particular aspects of landscape which could be a barrier to social communities, and could suggest whether the geographical extent of the immediate neighbourhood was determined by landscape or the number of households who lived in that neighbourhood.

The network analysis methodology used in this study could be employed to identify the local societies which Phythian-Adams believes to exist.[31] Studies of social areas could move beyond the ego-centric network approach which treats a parish or a town as the centre of the network. The methodology used in this study is capable of dealing with

[30] see A. Winchester, 'Parish, Township and Tithing: landscapes of local administration in England before the nineteenth century', The Local Historian, Vol. 27, No. 1. (1997).

[31] C. Phythian-Adams, 'Local History and Societal History', Local Population Studies, No. 51 (1993), p. 43.

whole networks of links between all the places in a locality. Although this research has been based on a much smaller geographical area than the local societies suggested by Phythian-Adams, it has been able to achieve the goal of this approach to local history, by identifying social communities within a geographical territory, based on networks of social ties.

This research has shown that even within the boundaries of a single parish, there were a number of small-scale township-based social communities. This pattern of social relations may be typical of other northern parishes which contained a number of townships. Alternatively, it may be the result of a traditional medieval-style of society in Brancepeth which had not been transformed by the economic and social changes which affected many other parishes in the early modern period. These possibilities could be investigated in further studies of northern parishes.

Appendix A Form 1 Used to collect details from brief baptismal entries in the parish register

BAPTISMAL RECORDS Sheet number: 374 Year: 1622 Date collected: 25/5/93 Date input:

Type	Record number	Date of baptism (Date of birth)	Sex	Child surname	Child first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
B	11117	19-2-1622	M	BRABANT	RAUFFE	—			

Type	Father surname	Father first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
F	BRABANT	JOHN	—	MR	PEDG BANKE	

Type	Mother surname	Mother first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments

Type	Comments

$

Type	Record number	Date of baptism (Date of birth)	Sex	Child surname	Child first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
B	11118	24-2-1622	M	PORTER	NICHOLES	—			

Type	Father surname	Father first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
F	PURTER	ROBERT	—	—	STOCKLEY	

Type	Mother surname	Mother first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments

Type	Comments

$

Type	Record number	Date of baptism (Date of birth)	Sex	Child surname	Child first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
B	11119	3-3-1622	M	MAYSON	GEORGE	—			

Type	Father surname	Father first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
F	MAYSON	JOHN	—	—	BRANSPETH TOWNE HEAD	

Type	Mother surname	Mother first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments

Type	Comments

Appendix A Form 2 Used to collect details from baptismal entries with additional information

BAPTISMAL RECORDS (godparents) Sheet number: 685 Year: 1632 Date collected: 2/7/93 Date input:

Type	Record number	Date of baptism (Date of birth)	Sex	Child surname	Child first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
B	11590	16-9-1632(11-9-1632)	F	JENKINSON	MARIA	—			

Type	Father surname	Father first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
F	JENKINSON	GEORGIO	—	—	BURNEGAIL	—

Type	Mother surname	Mother first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
M	JENKINSON	JANA	—	—	BURNEGAIL	—

Type	Comments

Type	Sex	GP(A) surname	GP(A) first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
G	M	BROWNE	THOMAS	S	——	BURNEGAIL	

Type	Sex	GP(A) relationship	GP(A) relative surname	GP(A) relative first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments

Type	Sex	GP(B) surname	GP(B) first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
G	F	SKURFEILD	FRANCISCA	M			

Type	Sex	GP(B) relationship	GP(B) relative surname	GP(B) relative first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments

Type	Sex	GP(C) surname	GP(C) first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
G	F	MARTIN	ANNA	M	——	MORLEY	

Type	Sex	GP(C) relationship	GP(C) relative surname	GP(C) relative first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Comments
GR	M	H	MARTIN	EDRI	M	——	MORLEY	

$

Appendix A Form 3 Used to collect details from basic marriage entries in the parish register

MARRIAGE RECORDS Sheet number: 305 Year: 1681 Date collected: 17/12/93 Date input:

Type	Record number	Date of marriage	Banns or licence	Residence
M	50696	31-5-1681		

Type	Husbands surname	Husbands first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age	Comments
H	BOWRON	RALPH	—	—	HOUGHTON(P)		
W	ALLEN	JANE	—	—	TUDDOW		

Type: Comments

$

Type	Record number	Date of marriage	Banns or licence	Residence
M	50697	12-7-1681		

Type	Husbands surname	Husbands first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age	Comments
H	HACKWORTH	WM	—	—	BRANSPETH		
W	COULSON	ISSABELL	—	—	LANCHESTER (P)		

Type: Comments

$

Type	Record number	Date of marriage	Banns or licence	Residence
M	50698	23-8-1681	L	

Type	Husbands surname	Husbands first name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age	Comments
H	HULL	THOMAS	—	GENT	STOCKLEY		
W	FORREST	ANNE	W	—	STOCKLEY		

Type: Comments

$

Appendix A Form 4 Used to collect details from marriage entries with additional information

MARRIAGE RECORDS Sheet number: 122 Year: 1629 Date collected: 28/7/93 Date input:

Type	Record number	Date of marriage	Banns or licence	Residence			
M	S0355	24-10-1629	B				
Type	**Husbands surname**	**Husbands first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**	**Age**	**Comments**
H	DOBISON	GULIELMUM					
Type	**Wife surname**	**Wife first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**	**Age**	**Comments**
W	PATTISON	MARGARETAM					
Type	**Husbands fathers surname**	**Husbands fathers first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**		**Comments**
HF	DOBISON	HENRICI	K	—	WILLINGTON		
Type	**Husbands mothers surname**	**Husbands mothers first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**		**Comments**
Type	**Wifes fathers surname**	**Wifes fathers first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**		**Comments**
WF	PATTISON	GILBERTI	K	—	STOCKLY		
Type	**Wifes mothers surname**	**Wife mothers first name**	**Status flag**	**Occupation**	**Residence**		**Comments**
Type	**Husbands gf surname**	**Husbands gf first name**					
Type	**Wife gf surname**	**Wife gf first name**					
Type	**Ex-husbands surname**	**Ex-husbands first name**	**Status flags**	**Occupation**	**Residence**		**Comments**
Type	**Comments**						

4

Appendix A Form 5 Used to collect details from burial entries in the parish register

BURIAL RECORDS SHEET NUMBER: 45 YEAR: 1606 DATE COLLECTED: 16/4/93 DATE INPUT:

Type	Record number	Date of burial (date of death)	Sex	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
D	60176	17-3-1606	M	STEWARD	WILLM				
Type	Relationship	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence			
Type	Comments								
X	STRANGER DYED AT EAST BRANDON								

$

Type	Record number	Date of burial (date of death)	Sex	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
D	60177	30-3-1606	M	CUMING	NICHOLES	—	—	EAST BRANDON	
Type	Relationship	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence			
Type	Comments								

$

Type	Record number	Date of burial (date of death)	Sex	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
D	60178	23-4-1606	F	BRYAN	ANN				
Type	Relationship	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence			
R	F	BRYAN	MICHELL	—	—	BIGING			
Type	Comments								

$

Type	Record number	Date of burial (date of death)	Sex	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence	Age
D	60179	1-5-1606	M	HACKFOURTH	JOHN	—	—	STOCKLEY	
Type	Relationship	Surname	First name	Status flags	Occupation	Residence			
Type	Comments								

$

Appendix A Examples of baptisms (without additional information) as they were entered on computer

```
$
B/11112/10-2-1622/F/BROWNE/AN/-
F/BROWNE/JOHN/-/-/WILLINGTON
$
B/11113/17-2-1622/F/DAWSON/FRANCES/-
F/DAWSON/-/-/MR/UNTHANK
$
B/11114/17-2-1622/M/PINKNEY/RAUFFE/-
F/PINKNEY/RAUFFE/-/-/EAST BRANDON
$
B/11115/17-2-1622/M/THIRKELL/THOMAS/-
F/THIRKELL/THO/-/-/TODDOW
$
B/11116/17-2-1622/F/FREND/JENNET/-
F/FREND/THOMAS/-/-/WILLINGTON
$
B/11117/19-2-1622/M/BRABANT/RAUFFE/-
F/BRABANT/JOHN/-/MR/PEDG BANKE
$
B/11118/24-2-1622/M/PORTER/NICHOLES/-
F/PORTER/ROBERT/-/-/STOCKLEY
$
B/11119/3-3-1622/M/MAYSON/GEORGE/-
F/MAYSON/JOHN/-/-/BRANSPETH TOWNE HEAD
$
B/11120/17-3-1622/F/CRAWE/ELLENER/-
F/CRAW/GEORG/-/-/BURNEGELL
$
B/11121/24-3-1622/M/WALKER/CHRISTO/-
F/WALKER/CHRISTO/-/-/TODDOW
$
B/11122/24-3-1622/F/RAWLING/JAYNE/-
F/RAWLING/GEO/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
B/11123/31-3-1622/F/YORKE/ISBELL/-
F/YORKE/WILLM/-/-/CROK
$
B/11124/31-3-1622/F/RACKET/MARGERY/-
F/RACKET/GEO/-/-/SKUTS HOUSSE
$
B/11125/5-4-1622/M/HACKFORTH/THOMAS/-
F/HACKFORTH/ANTHO/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
B/11126/5-4-1622/F/CUMING/MAUDLAND/-
F/CUMING/MARKE/-/-/HELMEDEN RAWE
$
B/11127/21-4-1622/M/BURLESON/NICHOLES/-
F/BURLESON/WILFRED/-/-/EAST BRANDON
$
B/11128/25-4-1622/M/RICHERDSON/RAUFFE/-
F/RICHESON/THO/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
B/11129/5-5-1622/M/WHITFIELD/PETER/-
F/WHITFIELD/PETER/-/-/STOCKLY
$
B/11130/12-5-1622/M/RODDON/FRANCIS/-
F/RODDON/CHRISTO/-/-/STOCKLEY
$
B/11131/19-5-1622/M/NICHOLSON/MARTIN/-
F/NICHOLSON/ANTHONEY/-/-/WEET BOTTON
$
B/11132/22-5-1622/M/FORSTER/MARTIN/I/-
F/FORSTER/GEORGE/-/-/TODDOW
$
```

Appendix A Examples of baptisms (with additional information) as they were entered on computer

B/11588/8-9-1632(8-9-1632)/F/HALL/MARIA/-
M/HALL/THOMA/-/-/EAST BRANDON/-
F/HALL/ISABELLA/-/-/EAST BRANDON
G/M/PICKERING/THOMAS/S/-/EAST BRANDON
G/F/FLETCHER/KATHERINA/S/-/EAST BRANDON
G/F/ANDERSON/MARGARETA/S
$
B/11589/16-9-1632(8-9-1632)/M/FARROW/JOHANNES/I/-
M/FARROW/MARGARETA/S/-/EAST BRANDON/-
G/M/HYND/JOHES/M/-/BRANDON
G/M/PICKERING/THOMAS/S/-/BRANDON
G/F/FARROW/JANA/M
$
B/11590/16-9-1632(11-9-1632)/F/JENKINSON/MARIA/-
F/JENKINSON/GEORGIO/-/-/BURNEGAIL/-
M/JENKINSON/JANA/-/-/BURNEGAIL/-
G/M/BROWNE/THOMAS/S/-/BURNEGAIL
G/F/SKURFEILD/FRANCISCA/M
G/F/MARTIN/ANNA/M/-/MORLEY
GR/M/H/MARTIN/EDRI/M/-/MORLEY
$
B/11591/23-9-1632(12-9-1632)/M/NOBLE/ROBERTUS/-
F/NOBLE/ROBERTO/-
M/NOBLE/JANA/-
G/M/BROWNE/WILLIMUS/M/-/WOOLLEY
G/M/WRIGHT/ROBTUS/S
G/F/LABURNE/ANNA/M/-/WOOLEY
GR/M/H/LABURNE/GEORGII/M/-/WOOLEY

Appendix A Examples of marriage records (without additional information) as they were entered on computer

```
M/50693/25-4-1681
H/WILKINSON/THO/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
W/PALLISON/ELIZ/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
$
M/50694/30-4-1681
H/MARLEY/THO/-/-/BRANSPETH
W/WANLASSE/JANE/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
M/50695/1-5-1681/L
H/MITCHELL/JOHN/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
W/LAZENBY/JOYCE/-/-/ST OSWALD IN DURHAM(P)
$
M/50696/31-5-1681
H/BOWRON/RALPH/-/-/HOUGHTON(P)
W/ALLEN/JANE/-/-/TUDDOW
$
M/50697/12-7-1681
H/HACKWORTH/WM/-/-/BRANSPETH
W/COULSON/ISSABELL/-/-/LANCHESTER(P)
$
M/50698/23-8-1681/L
H/HULL/THOMAS/-/GENT/STOCKLEY
W/FORREST/ANNE/W/-/STOCKLEY
$
M/50699/18-1-1682
H/JOHNSON/EDWARD/-/-/BARTON
W/ILEY/ELLINOR/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
$
M/50700/31-1-1682
H/JACKSON/THO/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
W/SMITH/HANNAH/-/-/ST MARIES LE BOW DUNELM
$
M/50701/2-2-1682
H/BANKES/WM
W/BAINBRIDGE/ELLINOR
$
M/50702/23-5-1682/L
H/DUNN/ROBT/-/-/MERRINGTON
W/SANDERSON/MARG/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
$
M/50703/4-9-1682
H/THURSEBIE/JOHN/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
W/HACKWORTH/ANNE/-/-/BRANCEPETH(P)
$
```

Appendix A Examples of marriage records (with additional information) as they were entered on computer

```
M/50354/13-10-1629/B
H/EMERSON/MARTINUM
W/MASON/ISABELLAM
HF/EMERSON/RICHARDI/-/-/BRANSPETH
WF/MASON/RADULPHI/K/-/BRANSPETH
P/HULL/THOMA
P/COCKEY/NICOLAO
P/MOBERLY/SAMUELE
$
M/50355/24-10-1629/B
H/DOBISON/GULIELMUM
W/PATTISON/MARGARETAM
HF/DOBISON/HENRICI/K/-/WILLINGTON
WF/PATTISON/GILBERTI/K/-/STOCKLY
P/DOUTHET/RADULPHO
P/MARTINDALE/JOHE
P/MOBERLY/SAMUELE
$
M/50356/21-1-1630/B
H/PATTISON/GULIELMUM/W/-/PAROCHIAE DE CONNYSCLIFFE
W/JACKSON/MARGARETAM
WM/JACKSON/MARIAE/W/-/HELMDEN RAW
P/-/THOMA
P/JACKSON/JOHE
P/MOB./SAM
$
M/50357/7-2-1630/L
H/PEELE/RADULPHI
W/WILFOOT/ALICIAM/-/-/TUDDOW/-/FAMULAM IN EADEM VILLA
HF/PEELE/GERARDI/-/-/TUDDOW
$
M/50358/20-4-1630/L
H/HULL/JOHANNEM
W/WHITE/ELLANORA/W
HF/HULL/CHRISTOFERI/K/-/NUPER DE HILL HOUSE
P/BRABANT/GEORGIO
P/HULL/THOMA
P/MOBERLEY/SAMUELE
$
```

Appendix A Examples of burial records as they were entered on computer

```
D/60164/4-12-1605/M/MAYRE/JOHN/I
R/F/MAYRE/CHRESTOPHER/-/-/CROOKE
$
D/60165/12-1-1606/M/BELL/ROGER/I
R/F/BELL/CUTHBER/-/-/BURNEGELL
$
D/60166/29-1-1606/M/FARROW/RAFFE
R/F/FARROW/ANTHONY/-/-/EAST BRANDON
$
D/60167/6-2-1606/F/HACKFOURTH/ELSABETH
R/F/HACKFOURTH/ROBERT/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
D/60168/13-2-1606/M/SMIRTHET/ROBERT/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
D/60169/16-2-1606/M/GARTH/THOMAS/I
$
D/60170/21-2-1606/M/WHEATLEY/ANTHONEY
R/F/WHEATLEY/EMERY/-/-/BILLEY RAWE
$
D/60171/23-2-1606/F/WHEATLY/MARY
R/F/WHEATLEY/EMERY/-/-/BILLEY RAWE
$
D/60172/10-3-1606/F/CALVERLEY/ANN
R/H/CALVERLEY/JOHN/-/MR/LITLEBURNE
$
D/60173/10-3-1606/M/CALSON/JOHN/-/-/EAST BRANDON
$
D/60174/12-3-1606/F/HULL/ANN
R/F/HULL/JAMES/-/-/BRANSPETH
$
D/60175/14-3-1606/M/RICHERDSONN/WILLM/S/-/TODDOW
$
D/60176/17-3-1606/M/STEWARD/WILLM
X/STRANGER DYED AT EAST BRANDON
$
D/60177/30-3-1606/M/CUMING/NICHOLES/-/-/EAST BRANDON
$
D/60178/23-4-1606/F/BRYAN/ANN
R/F/BRYAN/MICHELL/-/-/BIGING
$
D/60179/1-5-1606/M/HACKFOURTH/JOHN/-/-/STOCKLEY
$
D/60180/4-5-1606/M/SIMSON/WILLM/I
R/F/SIMSON/THOMAS
$
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Sources

BRANCEPETH CHURCH (BC)

Destroyed in the church fire of 1998	Church Seating Plan 1639 (Eighteenth-century copy)
Damaged in the church fire of 1998	Grave cover of Sir Thomas Calverley (died 1613) and Sir John Calverley (died 1638)

BRITISH LIBRARY (BL)

BL Harley 594 item 16	Bishop Pilkington's Returns to the Privy Council 1563

CITY OF LONDON RECORD OFFICE (CLRO)

Royal Contract Estates

RCE Rentals 5.4	Survey of Brancepeth 1629
RCE Rentals 5.6	Survey of Brancepeth (undated) circa 1620
RCE Rentals 166	Royal warrant 1628

DUCHY OF CORNWALL ARCHIVES (DCA)

S/M/5	Books of Compositions 1617, 1618, 1624

DURHAM CATHEDRAL DEAN AND CHAPTER LIBRARY (DDCL)

Hunter MSS

Vol. 11 item 19	Values of ecclesiastical livings 1634
Vol. 22 item 1	Book of Rates 1615
Vol. 22 item 4	Values of ecclesiastical livings 1635
Vol. 22 item 17	Ship money 1636
Vol. 44 item 6	A.L.(author otherwise anonymous), Certain Observations Touching Ye Estate of the Common-Wealth composed principally for the Benefitt of the County of Durham, 1634.

Longstaff MSS
Vol. 4 — Brancepeth Rectory court book

Sharp MSS
Vol. 110 — Lists of recusants 1628, 1689

Printed volumes
I/VII/87 — Peter Smart's sermon, printed 1629

DURHAM COUNTY RECORD OFFICE (DCRO)

Typescript index to Whitworth parish register
Brancepeth Estate Catalogue volumes 1-3
Salvin Papers Catalogue
Miscellaneous Catalogue

Brancepeth Estate

D/Br/D817	Will of John Hinde 1675
D/Br/D834	Will of Matthew Arkley 1667
D/Br/E1	Brancepeth Manor Court Book 1641-2
D/Br/E2	Brancepeth Manor Court 1642
D/Br/E3	Brancepeth Manor Court 1696
D/Br/E11	Brancepeth Manor Court 1676-7
D/Br/E13	Brancepeth Manor Court 1697
D/Br/E30	Description of the Manor of Brancepeth 1795-6
D/Br/E33	Schedule of deeds of the Manor of Brancepeth 1627-1727
D/Br/E44	Inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614
D/Br/E77	Brancepeth Tithe Book 1630-1639
D/Br/L82	Legal evidence regarding tithes 1703
D/Br/P4	Plan of the West Park 1739
D/Br/P5	Plan of Brancepeth manor 1741
D/Br/P6	Plan of Brancepeth manor circa 1741
D/Br/P81	Plan of Ivesley 1701

Durham City Archives
Du/6/3/1-3 — Henry Smith Charity Petitions 1612, 1627-31

Greenwell Papers

D/Gr/354	Copy of inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614
D/Gr/356	List of recusants 1615

Parish Records

Ep/Br/1-3	Registers of Brancepeth
Ep/Du.So 117	Registers of St. Oswald Durham
Ep/Whi 1	Register of Whitworth

Quarter Sessions

Q/S/I/9-43	Indictments 1625-1688
Q/S/OB1	Order Book 1616-1629
Q/S/OB2	Order Book 1629-1640
Q/S/OB4	Order Book 1649-1656
Q/S/OP1	Process Book 1619-1636

Salvin Papers

D/Sa/D966	Will of Anthony Harper 169? (date incomplete)
D/Sa/E571-3	Tudhoe enclosure 1639
D/Sa/E574-9	Enclosure of Spennymoor 1665-72
D/Sa/E923	Tudhoe Overseers of the Poor accounts 1670
D/Sa/E925	Tudhoe Overseers of the Poor accounts 1683
D/Sa/E926	Tudhoe Overseers of the Poor accounts 1698
D/Sa/E959	List of births, burials and marriages in Tudhoe 1695-6
D/Sa/E960	List of christenings, burials, marriages and batchelors in Tudhoe, 1699
D/Sa/E961	Lists of births, burials and marriages in Tudhoe, no date (probably 1699-1700)
D/Ss/E962-4	Tudhoe Marriage Duty returns 1695
D/Sa/E976	Tudhoe mines case 1655
D/Sa/X5	Book of Rates 1688

DURHAM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS (DULASC)

Typescript list of Durham Marriage Bonds
Leybourne Deeds Catalogue

Durham Diocesan Records

DDR/V8 -12 and box 414	Durham Consistory Court Depositions 1604-1634

DPR Probate records (filed by name and date proved)

	Brancepeth probate inventories 1600-1699
	Brancepeth wills 1600-1699
	Misc. administrations, bonds
	Will of Richard Whitfield, Durham, 1643

Tithe

Tithe plan	Brancepeth township 1838-9
Tithe plan	Brandon and Byshottles township 1838-9
Tithe plan	Crook and Billy Row township 1839
Tithe plan	Helmington Row township 1839
Tithe plan	Stockley township 1838-9
Tithe plan	Tudhoe township 1839
Tithe plan	Willington township 1838-9

Church Commission papers

CC 220751	Durham Bishopric Estates 1636
CC 221078-83	Durham Bishopric Estates 1636
CC 221308	List of recusants 1629

Dean & Chapter Post-Dissolution Muniments

Item 29 Box 30	Non-conformist meeting certificates and reports
SJB/5	Visitation book 1634-7
SJB/7	Visitation book 1637

Durham Chancery

Misc. Box 4	Quarter Sessions Indictments 1628-9

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE (PRO)

Palatinate of Durham

DURH/3/206 item 4	List of recusants 1624
DURH/4/1	Durham Chancery Decrees and Orders Book 1633-1642
DURH/4/2	Durham Chancery Decrees and Orders Book 1661-1670
DURH/4/3	Durham Chancery Decrees and Orders Book 1671-1706
DURH/5/1-13	Durham Chancery Orders 1613-1628
DURH/5/15-16	Durham Chancery Orders 1632-3
DURH/19/1/2	Presentments to Durham Quarter Sessions, 1644-48

Exchequer

E164/37	Survey of Brancepeth 1570
E178/3765	Inquisition on privileges and customs of Brancepeth Lordship 1614
E179/245/27	Hearth Tax Assessments 1665
E179/106/25	Hearth Tax Assessments 1674
E179/106/28	Hearth Tax Assessments 1666

Land Revenue

LR/2/214	Henry Vane's notes of fines and rents 1617-22
LR/2/192	Survey of Brancepeth 1607

Prerogative Court of Canterbury

PROB/11/222	Will of Richard Morland of East Brandon proved 1652
PROB/11/247	Will of Nicholas Briggs of Hareholme, proved 1654
PROB/11/247	Will of John Mychell of Brancepeth, proved 1654
PROB/11/247	Will of John Harrison of Sleetburn House proved 1655
PROB/11/281	Will of Nicholas Robson of Hill House, proved 1658
PROB/11/293	Will of Thomas Arrowsmith of Burnigill proved 1659

Special Collections

SC/171/3	Brancepeth Manor Court 1609-1628

State Papers

SP/14/4 (3 Oct. 1603)	Letter from Sanderson to the Bishop of Durham 1603
SP/14/48 (28 Oct. 1609)	Letter from Bishop of Durham to Salisbury 1609
SP/14/83 (31 Oct. 1615)	Letter from Samuel Sanderson to his father Henry Sanderson 1615
SP/15/32 (29 Aug. 1593)	Presentment about horsemen 1593
SP/15/40 (1614)	Forfeitures for fellonies 1614
SP/16/242 (11 July 1633)	Letter from John Richardson to Coke 1633
SP/16/301 (4 Nov. 1635)	Petition of William Conyers to the Lords and Commissioners for the Admiralty 1635

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